LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BS
2427
.H64

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

A New Study of an Old Problem

DEC 29 1931
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

A New Study of an Old Problem

By
WILLIAM BANCROFT HILL, D.D.
Author of "Mountain Peaks in the Life of Our Lord," "The Apostolic Age," "The Life of Christ," etc.

New York *Chicago*
Fleming H. Revell Company
London and Edinburgh

Copyright, MCMXXX, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 851 Cass Street
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 99 George Street

PREFACE

THE primary demand of this scientific age is for facts. And when the Risen Christ is presented to it as the unique and central figure of the Christian religion it asks proofs that He is risen indeed. This book, therefore, is not a series of meditations on the Easter message, profitable as those may be; nor is it a treatise on the theological implications of the resurrection, far reaching as those unquestionably are. It is purely an attempt to answer the question, Can we accept as fact what the gospels narrate concerning the Forty Days and the appearances of Jesus?

It is a time-worn question but just now it should have fresh interest. The Christian world is hoping and praying for a new Day of Pentecost. Is it prepared to preach with full conviction the message of that first day? "Jesus and the resurrection,"—the two cannot be separated unless we would make our preaching vain and our faith also vain. And while belief in the Risen Christ finds its full assurance in personal experience of His presence, it cannot be divorced from the historical proofs. If this book shall serve to send the reader back once more to weigh those proofs, it will have accomplished its purpose.

On a subject so old there can be little hope of presenting anything strikingly new, but there may be what to some will seem a new line of approach. Discussions a century or less ago began with the problem of miracles, for the sceptic stoutly denied the resurrection on the ground that miracles are impossible. But modern thought and modern science are reluctant to draw the old sharp line between the natural and the miraculous, the possible and the impossible. More recent discussions begin with the problem of the documents, and the sceptic tears these apart and then pronounces each shred evidently unreliable. But any document thus treated may equally be discredited. In the present volume the starting point is the need of the disciples. In their state of mind,—their fear, dismay, ignorance and hopelessness—could anything other than what the gospels relate have transformed them into the men we see on the Day of Pentecost? In other words, was there a need of the post-resurrection appearances; and if there was, can we doubt that it was supplied, unless we doubt all that the gospels tell of our Lord?

W. B. H.

Vassar College,
Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 9

PART I. THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION APPEARANCES 17

I. The Disciples in Fear and Sorrow . 19

II. The Disciples in Despair 25

III. The Disciples in Darkness . . . 33

IV. Easter Day 39

V. The Days that Followed 56

VI. The Teaching in Those Days . . . 67

VII. The Appearance to Paul 78

PART II. DIFFICULTIES IN THE DETAILS OF THE STORY 87

I. The Sources of Our Knowledge . . 89

II. The Body in Which Jesus Appeared . 99

III. Concerning Discrepancies and Omissions 104

1. The Visit of the Women 107
2. The Visit of Peter and John . . . 113
3. The Appearance to Mary 114
4. The Appearance to Peter 115
5. The Walk to Emmaus 116
6. The Appearance Easter Evening . . 117
7. The Appearance to Thomas . . . 120
8. The Appearance by the Lake . . . 122
9. The Appearance on the Mountain . 125
10. The Appearance to James . . . 126
11. The Appearance at Ascension . . . 127
12. The Appearance to Paul 130

PART III. SUBSTITUTES FOR THE GOSPEL STORY 133
I. Problems that Demand Solving . . 135
II. The Empty Tomb 137
III. Theories of Deliberate Deception . . 140
IV. Theories of Self-deception 142
V. Theory of Misunderstood Statements . 147
VI. Theory of Real Spiritual Visions . . 151

CONCLUSION 155

INTRODUCTION

TWO chapters in the life of Jesus—the opening and the closing one—are so filled with the marvelous or miraculous that they stand out distinct and separate from the rest. The birth of the babe in Bethlehem, celebrated by a chorus of angels and bringing star-gazing and star-guided magi with princely offerings, is a strange prelude to the lowly, uneventful years of the boy in Nazareth, who toils in a carpenter's shop and shares the monotonous life of the Galilean peasantry. And the Forty Days, filled with mysterious appearances and vanishings and closing with a visible ascent into the clouds, stand in strong contrast to the Passion Week whose incidents are tragic indeed but with little of the supernatural.

The peculiar character of these two chapters has given rise to endless discussion, and caused many honest critics to reject them as unhistorical. The story of the virgin birth they pronounce a mass of childish fancies or a medley of incidents borrowed from heathen religions or, at best, a symbolic statement of spiritual truths; and the resurrection appearances of Jesus are explained as illusions caused by strong emotion, or as misinterpreted statements of apostolic convictions. Certainly, if the supernatural is rejected, there is so little left in these two chapters we might as well omit them from the story of Jesus and begin His life with the home at Nazareth and end it with the tomb at Jerusalem. Indeed, that is where many of the recent Lives do begin and end.

The virgin birth is of profound interest and importance in Christian doctrine, but the resurrection is far more so. It has been rightly described as "the most prominent, the most distinctly emphasized, fact in the New Testament." The references to it in the Epistles are more numerous than to the cross itself. A gospel without an account of it would be so incomplete that when the original ending of Mark was in some way hopelessly lost, an unknown scribe felt he ought to supply one as best he could. The apostles proclaimed the resurrection as the crowning proof that Jesus was both Lord and God, and based upon it their assurance of help and guidance from Him in the present life and of reunion with Him in the hereafter. Scholars of all kinds agree that without a firm belief in it there never would have been a Christian church, since men do not forsake home and friends and fortune to endure ignominy and persecution and to hazard or lay down their lives for a dead leader, and the offer of him to the world as its life-giving Lord would bring no response except ridicule. Of course, the fact that the apostles and their associates had a firm belief in the resurrection does not prove that the resurrection was a fact: but certainly they had abundant incentive and opportunity to ascertain whether it was or not.

To-day, belief in Christ may exist without acceptance of His physical resurrection. Among His loyal followers are some who hold that the appearances during the Forty Days were purely spiritual, and others who do not care to inquire into His rising from the dead because their consciousness of His presence with them now is strong enough to make them say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." But if we pronounce the gospels untrustworthy in their clear and repeated statement that Jesus appeared in the flesh after death, how can we place confidence in their other statements? We may excuse inaccuracies concerning unimportant matters, but a mistake or falsehood about such a central and vital fact shakes our faith in all the rest. Or if we ignore the gospel records and base our belief in a living Christ wholly upon personal experience, how can we be sure we are not building upon the shifting sands of emotion, and what have we to offer to those who do not trust our testimony? Moreover,—and this I shall emphasize later on—if there was a real need on the part of the disciples that Jesus should return to them after His death, can we see in Him a loving and mighty Saviour if He did not return?

Confessedly, the story of the resurrection is not an easy one to accept. It tells of the greatest of miracles (if miracles can be distinguished as great and small) and one in which are some specially perplexing features. It is related in all four gospels; yet no two tell it alike, and their variances are hard to reconcile. Like the rest of the story of Jesus it was repeated orally many times before being put in writing, and its peculiar character made it specially liable to change or distortion in the telling. Evidently a sceptic can find plenty of points at which to assail it; and a believer must be prepared to give strong reasons for accepting it as true.

We often say that for a fair discussion of the resurrection any prepossession or, more exactly, any bias should first be put aside. But is this possible? No student, however desirous to be fair-minded, can deal with a mooted question without an inclination, perhaps unconscious, arising from early training or from present influences, to reach a particular conclusion. And what appears strong evidence to one man, will have less force with another; or what one pronounces perfectly natural, the other will declare absurd. There seems no way in which to avoid this: the utmost that can be done is to make allowance for the personal equation in whatever conclusion is reached.

Far more important than prepossessions are presuppositions. These are conclusions already reached by previous study that not only form the starting point for the next investigation but largely decide what the result will be. For example, when Renan in the preface to his *Vie de Jésus* tells us, "Miracles are things that never happen," we know that with this presupposition he is bound to find a natural explanation of the resurrection. So, too, the presupposition that Jesus was merely a remarkable Jewish teacher in the first century makes the story of His resurrection vastly more difficult to accept. I have said there are some who recognize the deity of Christ without believing that He rose from the dead: I know of none, and I think there can be none, who does the reverse.

We might as well recognize at the outset that the resurrection of Jesus will seem incredible if viewed apart from its connection with the other great facts of the Christian faith. We waste time to study it until some conclusion, provisional or final, has been reached about these; for they form the presuppositions with which those who do believe approach it. The most important are the following: there is a personal God who controls the universe; He desires men to know and love Him; they are in need of special help toward doing this; Jesus was one with God in such a way that His deeds and words were a revelation of the Father and a divinely appointed means for creating in men that loving knowledge which is life eternal; one part of His life-work was the preparation of disciples who should be His witnesses: and in this preparation the resurrection and the Forty Days were indispensable. Evidently here is a chain of many links, requiring a whole volume of theology to discuss whether each link holds. I shall consider only the last link,—the need of the resurrection and the evidence that the need was adequately met—presupposing that the other links do hold.

An objection may be raised at the outset. The resurrection is a part, an important part, of the proof that Jesus was divine: He "was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead," says Paul, and the Christian world repeats it. Is it not, therefore, reasoning in a vicious circle, if we presuppose His deity to make credible His resurrection and then use the resurrection to establish His deity? On the contrary, it is simply following an established line of scientific investigation. The scientist forms an hypothesis based on certain facts and then applies it to certain other facts; if it agrees with them, he considers it to this extent verified. In like manner, from certain facts in the life of Jesus,—His character, teachings, acts and influence,—we suppose Him to be the unique Son of God: and with this supposition we study His resurrection: if we find it to be in harmony with what we already have accepted, we are justified in using it as a further proof of His Sonship.

One more presupposition is used in the present study. The record of the resurrection is found mainly in the four gospels. How trustworthy are these? To answer this we must first find an answer to certain other questions. When were these books written? Where and how did the writers gain their information? Would they seek to record the facts without suppression or distortion? And, since the existing manuscripts differ, can we ascertain what was originally written? Here are questions upon which a whole library of books has been written: I have added a very modest volume myself. To reproduce it here would be needless. Let me simply state the conclusion I reached and with which I begin the present study, viz., the gospels can be accepted as reliable history, more reliable than most ancient records. I base this conclusion not upon any theory of inspiration, but upon what seems to me well proven,—that the evangelists were honest, God-fearing men who had a strong desire to preserve the facts concerning Jesus; that they wrote when many who had known Him, and still more who had heard the apostles tell about Him, were living to furnish these facts and test the accuracy of the record: and that, though the original manuscripts perished, we know not when or how, the patient labours of able textual critics have reproduced their text with great exactness. The difficult question, To what degree is the fourth gospel an interpretation rather than a record of Our Lord's life? need not here concern us; since what is found in John about the resurrection does not differ in character from what the other gospels give.

The chapters that follow fall into three divisions. In the first I have narrated the events of the Forty Days, weaving together and harmonizing as best I can the gospel accounts: and I have specially tried to make clear how necessary the appearance of their Lord in the flesh was for the disciples, if they were to be wakened from the dismay and despair caused by His crucifixion. In the second I have taken up each part of the record for a critical discussion of its main points, especially of the difficulties to belief it may present. And in the third I have considered the explanations and theories usually offered by those who reject the gospel account and frame substitutes for it. The general reader will probably find the second division less interesting and useful than the other two.

I

THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION APPEARANCES

I. THE DISCIPLES IN FEAR AND SORROW

"ALL YE shall be made to stumble; for it is written, 'Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad'" (Mark 14: 27). This prophecy, quoted by Jesus at the Last Supper, was fulfilled literally. When He was arrested on Thursday evening, the Eleven fled and scattered, not daring even to keep together lest so large a group might attract the attention of their enemies. We cannot blame their flight. If the Master refused to use His power to defend Himself, they were too few and feeble to defend Him. Peter's impulsive, awkward sword-cut had brought His quick rebuke; and His words to the officers, "If ye seek me, let these go their way," seemed a permission or even a command to flee. What else could they do?

Peter and John quickly rallied, regaining courage enough to follow the soldiers at a distance and venture into the court of the high priest. There John had little reason to be afraid, for he could claim acquaintance with the owner; but Peter was apprehensive and nervous,—the man he had wounded was the high priest's slave and might seek revenge. Three times he was nearly identified, and escaped only by vigorous lying; and then the crow of the cock and the rebuking look of his Lord turned fear into shame and tears, and he rushed away in self-condemnation. John seems to have remained or kept in touch with the proceedings until the sentence of crucifixion was pronounced the next morning; then he hastened with the dire news to where the women were lodged in the city, and guided Mary and the others to Golgotha.

None of the men disciples except John came to the cross. Possibly news of the crucifixion had not reached them in their hiding-places; possibly fear kept them away. Certainly they were helpless to render assistance or comfort to the sufferer; and the sight of His sufferings would only torture their own hearts. No such deterrents kept the women away. Love conquered fear, and gave strength to endure sorrow. They were watching by the cross when Jesus entrusted Mary to John, and he took her away from the mocking rabble; they were there when he returned to share their watch; and they lingered until the precious body had been taken down and laid in the tomb close at hand, and the great stone had been rolled against its door, and Joseph and Nicodemus had gone, and the twilight was deepening into night.

The fear aroused when Jesus was taken became doubly great after He had been put to death. Until the very end the apostles had hoped that by some mighty miracle He would overwhelm His enemies. Now that hope was gone. And the treachery of Judas increased their forebodings. He knew where they had been accustomed to lodge; and he might, as soon as the Sabbath restrictions were ended, come guiding the enemy to arrest them. Moreover, since he had proved false and hostile, whom of their number could they trust? Fear held them aloof from each other. They were, indeed, scattered as sheep without a shepherd,—sheep among wolves.

John seems to have remained in the city; and Peter, if not with him, was close at hand. The others, feeling a countryman's sense of helplessness in a great city, would wish to stay outside the walls. Some may have sought friends in Bethany or elsewhere. Thomas apparently fled so far away that news of the Easter events did not reach him until later. Those who had no other refuge would find shelter among the orchards of the surrounding hills. Thus they remained scattered and in hiding through Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath.

Why did not the Eleven flee at once to their homes in Galilee? Nothing was to be gained by staying in this stronghold of their enemies, and they must have longed for the shelter and safety of their native hills. Some scholars maintain that they did start back immediately. But even if the gospel narrative were not against this theory, we would pronounce it incredible. They were too scattered, bewildered and overwhelmed with fear and dismay to form even the simplest plan. Such a journey, if they went back together as they had come, required them first to collect their number, or to agree upon some common place and definite hour of departure. Also, the women unless they were to be left behind, must be persuaded to abandon the sacred task, a woman's work, of bestowing the last care upon the body of Jesus,—a task for which at once they had begun preparations. Even if one of the Eleven were ready to abandon his comrades and flee alone, he would be held fast by the Jewish law. To travel more than a short distance on any Sabbath was a serious transgression; and on this special Sabbath, which was the Passover and doubly sacred (John 19: 31), it was a heinous offence. The religious authorities, who were likewise the civil officers, would arrest anyone discovered in such lawbreaking, and hold him for punishment. Indeed, to the disciples themselves the idea of travel on that day would be abhorrent. There was nothing to be done but to wait until the restrictions were lifted. So they "rested on the Sabbath," if a day spent in fear and hiding could be called a rest.

Great as was the fear that kept the disciples in hiding, it was small compared with the sorrow that overwhelmed them through the long hours of that Saturday. All the ties of love had bound them with increasing closeness to Him who had been at once their companion, their teacher, their elder brother and their Lord. And now that these ties were horribly and hopelessly severed, life seemed empty and worthless.

At the outset the motives of the Twelve in following Jesus may have been mainly selfish. He was the new and wonderful prophet about whom everyone was talking, and around whom the crowds gathered wherever He appeared. To be selected by such a one as His companions, to stand beside Him as He preached, to be envied as His bosom friends and to bask in the glory of His miracles, appealed strongly to their vanity. And when His Messianic claims began to be prominent, ambition wakened and filled their minds with dazzling visions. A king must have his trusted ministers; a court will bow before the royal favourites; there are rich prizes to be grasped by someone: we have left all to follow Him, what shall be our reward? So they weighed His words and watched His acts, trying to guess what He had in mind to bestow and who were most likely to be the fortunate recipients.

Selfishness never wholly disappeared; it is too deeply imbedded in human nature. At the Last Supper it revealed itself in the struggle to secure the chief place at the table, and in the refusal to perform a task that was reckoned menial and belonging to the least important. And even now somewhat of their sorrow still was selfish, caused by the downfall of ambitious hopes. But a nobler motive for discipleship had been steadily developing. Love begets love; and to these men through months of closest companionship there had been given a love more pure and steadfast and wonderful than they or any mortals had ever known. It had borne with their shortcomings and ministered to their needs, revealing itself in a thousand ways and binding them with cords that could not be broken. It had not availed against the selfishness of Judas; but it had mastered the others until they were ready to lay down their lives for their Lord. With Him they had been as little children:

He was so great, so wise, so mysterious as well as so patient and tender. They had learned in ever increasing measure to trust Him, to lean upon Him, to find peace and joy in His presence. His death had truly left them as orphans.

Deep in their memories were stored certain words of promise and cheer, " I will not leave you orphans; I come unto you," " I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice "; but these were covered so deeply by the avalanche of horrors that now when needed they could not be found. And if they had been recalled, they would give little aid. Jesus Himself describes His words after the Last Supper as " dark sayings,"—veiled, figurative language. Also, the return that He promised was not a brief, visible reappearance following the crucifixion, but a permanent coming and abiding with them of which they would be aware though the world saw Him not. This was too mysterious to furnish them comfort now.

Even the consolations of religion were denied them. Fear kept them from the temple where the stately ceremonies of the Passover were in progress, and from the synagogue where the Sabbath services were being held. And when they tried to pray in their places of seclusion, dark doubts arose, making prayer seem useless. Jesus had taught them to look to God, and say Our Father; but if God had not heard His prayer, why think He will hear theirs? Under other circumstances their heavy hearts might have been lightened by the thought that Jesus was in heaven, where some day they might rejoin Him. But the cross was so evidently a proof of the curse of God upon its victim (Deut. 21: 23; Gal. 3: 13) that they could not cherish even this hope. IV

II. THE DISCIPLES IN DESPAIR

ON THE day after the crucifixion the Jewish rulers must have congratulated each other when they met. They had compassed the death of that Galilean imposter, who denied their supremacy, broke their laws and baffled their attempts to arrest Him. With His death all the crazy talk about His being the Messiah must end. Even if His disciples did continue to assert His claims, no one would listen. A rabbi the Sanhedrin had pronounced a blasphemous teacher, a king the Romans had put to death, a crucified Messiah! They smiled grimly at the absurdity of it. Emma

To the disciples in their fear and sorrow the same thoughts must have come, but with far different emotion. They had not been taken wholly by surprise when Jesus was arrested; for they knew Judea swarmed with His enemies. Thomas had predicted that to visit the sorrowing sisters in Bethany would bring death upon them all; and the others, though less despondent by nature, had remonstrated against that visit. The Triumphal Entry banished their fear for a day; but the morrow brought it back again. More than once, as they waited for the Passover, they must have said to each other, "Would that we were safely back in Galilee!" Nevertheless, it was impossible for any of them except the pessimistic Thomas, to fear any serious harm to their Master. They believed Him to be the Messiah, and their conception of His future centered in a triumph. Repeatedly they had marvelled that He did not put forth His supernatural power and overwhelm His enemies. James and John urged Him to do this, when a Samaritan village refused to receive Him. And on Palm Sunday, after they had exultingly followed Him into the courts of the temple, all waited eagerly for such a miracle, and were filled with disappointment when He did nothing. A defeated Messiah! a dead Messiah! Perish the thought! True, Jesus had taught them by word and example that He and they must humble themselves and be as servants; and He had spoken mysterious words about laying down His life. But this had not changed their fixed idea that a Messiah, God's anointed vice-regent, must put all enemies under His feet and rule the world in majesty. In this way,—and they could think of no other,—He would fulfil the ancient and cherished prophecies, which gave to Israel dominion over all nations.

Even to the last hour on the cross the Eleven must have hoped that somehow Jesus would save Himself. There are to-day those who apologize for Judas by insisting that he led the soldiers to Gethsemane because he thought their attempt to arrest Jesus would force Him to assert His Messiahship by a decisive miracle. They maintain that he had grown impatient with the slow way in which Jesus was pushing His claims, and planned to put Him in a position where He would be compelled to act at once and effectively. If he was a traitor, it was to the priests with whom he bargained, and not to his Lord whom he strove to help in this bungling way. Without seeking thus to defend Judas, may we not see in his final remorse proof that his betrayal had borne more deadly fruit than he anticipated,—that even he could not believe that Jesus would suffer Himself to be put to death?

Why were the disciples so unprepared for His death, when the gospel record shows that He had spoken of it repeatedly and tried to impress upon them its necessity? A fully satisfactory answer is not easy to find. Undoubtedly some of His sayings were not as intelligible to the Twelve as they are now to us. When He first foretold that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be killed and after three days rise again (Mark 8: 31), Peter understood that He was talking about Himself, and cried out in horror against the prediction: but the sharp rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan," seemed to indicate that he had made a grave mistake. Therefore, on later occasions, when the prediction was repeated, it was received in silence, lest another rebuke should be incurred (Mark 9: 32; Luke 18: 34). But the mystery of His words and the rebuke to Peter would impress the saying firmly on their memory. And doubtless they often discussed it among themselves, questioning, Who is this Son of Man about whom He speaks? Also, we are told that when Jesus charged the three who witnessed the transfiguration to tell no man what they had seen "save when the Son of Man should have risen from the dead," they questioned among themselves "what the rising from the dead should mean" (Mark 9: 9–10). It was a blind saying for, though like Martha they knew of a resurrection at the last day, there was nothing in that to make them expect the event of Easter morning. Indeed, the teachings of Jesus about the resurrection (*e. g.* Luke 20: 35) would hinder rather than help such expectation.

Again, it is possible that some of His statements have been given us in a form clearer than the original utterance. The later events had fully revealed their meaning; and naturally that meaning was brought out in the form in which the statements were repeated. What is done in Matthew in one instance where Mark's general term, "kill" is changed to the definite "crucify" (Matt. 20: 19; Mark 10: 33), may have been done frequently in telling the story of Jesus before it was written down.

Once more, it is very probable, for reasons we shall state later, that some of the sayings of Jesus now placed among the teachings given before His death may belong to what He taught after His resurrection. How strange and meaningless, for example, would be the command to take up the cross and follow Him if spoken before the crucifixion: how full of meaning if spoken afterward!

These are, perhaps, unsatisfactory answers to our question; but certainly, however we may account for it, the disciples did not understand that their Master was to die. The Suffering Servant of Jehovah, pictured by Isaiah, was much in the mind of Jesus during the last months of His life, but His followers were thinking rather of the Victorious King of the second Psalm. When they followed Him to Jerusalem for the last Passover, "they supposed that the Kingdom of God was immediately to appear" (Luke 19: 11). The evident seriousness of their Master sometimes cast a shadow of fear upon their high anticipations (Matt. 17: 23). But when He told them that the Son of Man must be put to death, they did not believe He was speaking about Himself, else James and John could not have come to Him, immediately after He had spoken the saying for the third time, with a request for the highest place in His kingdom.

Another question forces itself upon us, Why did not Jesus tell His disciples about His death and resurrection so plainly that they could not fail to understand? They were slow-witted, and sometimes tried His patience almost to breaking by their inability to grasp His meaning; yet certainly He could have made evident these two future facts. But are we sure that the future was so clear to Him, that He could foretell it positively? If Jesus foresaw each step of His earthly path, we cannot claim that He entered fully into our human life: for we walk by faith, and what lies before us is hid or, at best, dimly seen. When He presented Himself to the nation as its long-promised Messiah, surely He hoped it would accept Him and become, as the prophets had foretold, His light-bearer to all the world; otherwise His invitation would be merely an empty form. The hope of acceptance waned as popular favour changed to indifference, and the hatred of the rulers grew more strong; but it did not wholly disappear until the end: and the prayer in Gethsemane, "If it be possible," may be its last expression,—this cup so bitter to drink being the blood-guiltiness of His own Israel. May we not think, therefore, that Jesus spoke in veiled terms about His death because there ever was the possibility that it might not be necessarily at Jerusalem, and He would not unduly and prematurely distress His disciples? Nevertheless, He would place in their memory sayings which, when recalled later on, would make them realize that the possibility of death at the hands of His countrymen was not unforeseen, and that He voluntarily laid down His life at their demand.

Again, suppose that Jesus had told His disciples clearly what was before Him and them at Jerusalem, would faith and love in the earlier days have been strong enough to hold them? When, after feeding the five thousand, He refused to be made king and gave a sacramental discourse at Capernaum, the desertion that followed was so complete as to make Him ask the Twelve, "Will ye also go away?" They remained faithful because they believed in Him; but I doubt if they would have had the heart to follow, had they known the path was not to a throne but to a cross.

And how about the last days, when the end seemed close at hand: why did He not strengthen the hearts of the group in the upper chamber against the coming hours of sorrow by words less enigmatic than "A little while ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me" and "Now ye are filled with sorrow, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy"? It seems the kindest thing to have done, but was it the best? It would have changed their whole mental and spiritual experience. Their fears for their own safety, their anguish at the loss of their Master, their despair of His cause, would never have arisen: only a deep sorrow that He must endure such dreadful suffering. They would feel as we do when a dear friend must undergo an operation that we know is most painful but not at all dangerous. The certainty of a reunion on the morrow would make Saturday simply a day of waiting and eager expectation; and they might even smile at the exultation of their Lord's foes. Also, if they had not been forced to think they had lost their Master forever, they could not have realized what life without Him must be, or felt the blessedness of the promise He gave them later on, "Lo, I am with you always."

The experience through which the disciples passed was a most trying one. Jesus knew it would be. His words at the Last Supper reveal how full His heart was of sympathy for them and of concern lest they fail in the test which they must meet. Satan was to sift them as wheat is sifted: and His prayer went up that they might come through without a loss. That prayer was answered, save in the case of Judas. But for a time faith and hope were almost blotted out. Jesus had claimed to be the Messiah; and now He was dead! What about those claims? He had assured them that the gates of Hades could not prevail against His church; but they had prevailed against Himself. He had pictured the rewards He would give His faithful followers when He came into His kingdom; and now even the grave-cloth in which His corpse was wrapped had to be provided by a friend. They had trusted Him, and He had failed them. They loved Him still and believed in Him too deeply to pronounce Him a deceiver, but they had to admit that He had been self-deceived. And with His death all hopes of His triumph and of a Messianic kingdom ended in despair.

There was a deeper despair even than this. Whatever more Jesus may or may not have been, they knew Him to be the very noblest, holiest of men. They had lived in closest touch with Him, seen Him at all hours and in all circumstances, been admitted to His inner life, gained more than a glimpse of His closeness to God. If ever one deserved the favour and protection of God, they believed it was this Righteous One. But He had been left helpless to his enemies, and had died crying "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Could God be good, and treat His most devoted servant like the worst of sinners? Could there be a God, if such things happen?

III. THE DISCIPLES IN DARKNESS

WHEN JUDAS absconded, taking with him the common purse, the apostles must have been left nearly or quite penniless. Still, that was unimportant: they had friends in the city and at Bethany from whom they might get a loan to meet their simple wants as they made their way on foot to Galilee. What they sorely lacked was something far different: it was the knowledge and spiritual development indispensable if they were to go forth on a life mission as heralds of the salvation that is in Christ. They had not yet grasped His gospel, and now that He was gone there was no one who could teach them.

One proof of the early date and truthfulness of the Synoptics is the frankness with which they portray the stolidity and stupidity as well as the selfishness and low ideals of the apostles. In the thought of later days the apostles were exalted figures free from the imperfections of ordinary men. And the process of transfiguration into saints was a rapid one. We can see its incipient stage in Luke which tones down the strongly realistic picture in Mark by omitting some of the derogatory incidents or adding a little note of apology. Had the gospels been written even early in the second century, it is doubtful if we ever would have been told the difficulties under which Jesus laboured when preparing Galilean fishermen to become fishers of men. He taught them patiently, and welcomed with joy every spiritual response to His words; but again and again He must have been almost in despair, as when He cried out, "Do ye not yet perceive, neither understand? have ye your hearts hardened? having eyes, see ye not, and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?" (Mark 8: 16f.). According as they were able to receive He imparted to them certain precious truth concerning God and man and Himself and His kingdom; but these were very imperfectly comprehended; and concerning the deepest and most important part of His work and message they had to be left in darkness because they were not ready for it and, also, it was not yet ready for them.

There had been little in the public ministry of Jesus to develop deep spiritual life in the Twelve. The months in Galilee were for them almost a holiday season. They basked in the popular favour that shone upon their Master; they exulted in His miracles and shared the gratitude ensuing; for the first time in their lives they found themselves persons of importance. And the multitude swarmed around Jesus so constantly that He had scant opportunity to talk with them alone. In the later months He was more with them apart; and there was leisure to reveal the inner experiences of His soul. But there had been little in their simple, commonplace earlier lives to fit them to grasp the revelation. Indeed, it is painful to note how Jesus turned to them repeatedly for a sympathy they were unable to give. John seems to have been by nature more spiritual than the others, and so to have come closer to the mind of Jesus: but he was, we think, scarcely more than a boy in years and therefore with only a boy's experience of life.

The Passion Week, especially the dark hours that followed the crucifixion, brought to the disciples a great spiritual quickening. A sword pierced their souls as well as the soul of the Virgin Mother: and out of their own anguish and loneliness arose a perception of the universal need of a Divine Comforter and Companion. In their shame and sense of failure from abandoning their Lord they yearned to hear Him say to them and to all, " Thy sins are forgiven thee." When Jesus had taught them in former days His words had been as seed on a hardened footpath; but after each of their hearts had been ploughed by the anguish of Good Friday, the despair of the Sabbath day that followed and the overwhelming surprise of Easter, it was good ground for any teachings He might impart. And indeed there was much to teach.

Suppose there had been no return, what were the questions that would have filled the minds of the Twelve and for which they had no answer? Foremost of all was the death upon the Cross: was it voluntary? was it necessary? what did it reveal except the baseness and cruelty of men? To a Jew the cross was a stumbling-block whenever he would approach Jesus as the Messiah; how were these

Galilean disciples to remove its offence, as they must before they could point out in it the power of God and the wisdom of God?

Then there was the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What meant the mysterious acts and words at the Passover meal? In what sense was the bread His body and the wine His blood? The question is one to which men even to-day cannot agree upon an answer. And if Jesus commanded "This do in remembrance of me," just what was it they were to do and when,—at the close of each Passover meal, or whenever they ate together? And His solemn statement, "Verily, I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God," was just as mysterious as the rest. The men who sat at the table when Jesus instituted the sacrament, were a sobered and sorely puzzled group. They could not but feel that He was doing something very sacred and wonderful, but its meaning was wholly beyond them.

Again there was the Holy Spirit. From their acquaintance with the Old Testament the disciples were accustomed to think of the spirit of God as a spirit of power and holiness which was poured forth upon His people and especially upon His chosen servants, enabling them to do mighty works and to speak with authority in His name. They believed that Jesus had this spirit in special measure: and through their relationship to Him, as when at His bidding they went forth on special missions, they felt that they, too, had somewhat of it. But in His last long talk with them before He died, He had spoken repeatedly of a Paraclete, one whom He or the Father would send to be with them always, to guide them into all truth, to be His witness, and to convict the world in respect of sin and rightousness and judgment. And He had said "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I go I will send him unto you." Here, too, was a mystery so great as to make His words almost meaningless.

What about their knowledge of the Master Himself,—of His real being? They had been with Him many months, part of the time in closest companionship and under most varied circumstances. Yet how far had they really come to know Him? He had given no doctrinal statement about Himself: that was not His mode of teaching; for doctrinal truth is not vital unless it is spiritually apprehended. Clearly as He had manifested Himself to them, there was much that was hidden, and what they saw was too great for them fully to comprehend, even as it is for us to-day. His revelation of love and power and a moral perfection that is more than mere sinlessness, could be grasped only so far as they themselves partook of these divine attributes. They had accepted Him as the long-expected Messiah, hailing Him as Son of God; but their idea of the Messiah was earthly, and Son of God on their lips meant only a divinely anointed son of David. True, from the Fourth Gospel we might conclude that Jesus proclaimed His deity so clearly that not only the disciples but all who saw and heard Him could not fail to understand. But John was written to make clear the meaning that was latent in His words; and it pictures our Lord, not as men did see Him, but as they might have seen had their eyes been opened. More than once when the disciples thought they had come to know their Master, some manifestation of His being left them still in perplexity. And when He died upon the cross, the dimness of their knowledge changed to utter darkness.

Other problems pressed upon them, and could not be solved. If Jesus was the Messiah, what about His kingdom? They had pictured it as an earthly one, glorious as that of Solomon and reaching to the ends of the earth: but when the multitude on the shores of the Lake offered Him a crown, He had turned away; and when Jerusalem itself joined in the Triumphal Entry, He gave no response. Was the kingdom a delusion? True, He had said to Pilate, " My kingdom is not of this world." Where was it then and what? And how about the Messianic prophecies? Could they be fulfilled by a Messiah who had no crown except that which mocking soldiers thrust upon His head before they led Him to the cross?

Most immediate and pressing was the question of the future mission of the Twelve. They had been chosen to be with Jesus and to carry on His work. But now that He was gone and His work seemed to have ended in failure, what was there for them to do; or should they do nothing at all?

Surely the Easter morning found the apostles in sore need not only of consolation but of instruction. In their present ignorance they could not answer the doubts and questions arising in their own minds,—far less those that their enemies would promptly bring forward, if they undertook to defend their dead Master and go forward with His work. Who could teach them? Jesus had promised a Paraclete to guide them into all truth; but they were not yet ready for His illumination. The truth which He would make clear had hardly found entrance into their minds. The work of the Master was incomplete until He had given these future evangelists the gospel they were to proclaim.

IV. Easter Day

Easter morning found the disciples with their sorrow and despair undiminished, and their fears, if possible, increased: for their enemies were now released from the restraints of the Sabbath, and could hunt them down systematically. Fear exaggerated their peril, making each unknown person a possible agent of the Sanhedrin, eager to report them to its officers. How to escape became the pressing problem. On the morrow they might dare to set out for Galilee, since on the third day of the Passover feast many with homes at a distance were accustomed to depart; but any travellers setting out on this the second day would be noticed at once and, if Galileans, might be suspected to be disciples of the lawbreaking, false prophet. There seemed, therefore, nothing to do except to remain in hiding. Only the women felt it safe to appear openly: no Jew, however hostile, would molest a woman. They could proceed with their self-appointed task of caring for the corpse of their Lord. Yet even they were apprehensive, and hastened to the tomb in the grey light of the morning, when few persons would be abroad.

The visit of the women to the empty tomb is the prelude of the resurrection story. If the story were a fiction, we might expect it to begin with an account of Christ's coming forth from the tomb. Imagination would dwell on this, and picture it as seen by someone. Indeed the late and apocryphal Gospel of Peter does describe how the guards and the Jewish elders, who are said to have been with them, saw " three men coming forth from the tomb, two of them supporting the other, and a cross following them; and the heads of the two reached to heaven, but the head of the third overpassed the heavens. And they heard a voice from the heavens, saying, 'Didst thou preach to them that sleep?' And a response was heard from the cross 'Yea.' " We need not waste time in discussing the trustworthiness of such a tale, though we might profitably note the contrast between it and the sober gospel account. Even Matthew, though giving the story about the guard, which we shall mention later, does not state that anyone saw Jesus come forth: the awe-inspiring angel descends and rolls away the stone that the tomb may be seen to be already empty. The body of its occupant was already gone.

In all the accounts of Easter morning Mary Magdalene has the foremost place. Who was she? The Roman Catholic church and many Protestant scholars identify her with the woman who was a sinner (Luke 7: 37) and Mary of Bethany. But Mary of Bethany, quiet, meditative, remaining in the house when Martha goes forth to meet Jesus, is decidedly unlike the energetic, impulsive, adventurous Magdalene. Also, Mary of Bethany would lodge in her own home; and it is most unlikely that she would start from there in the darkness so as to reach the tomb by early dawn on Easter morning,—a walk of two miles. If the identification of the two Marys fails, there is little to connect the Magdalene with the sinful woman. Her appellation probably indicates that she was from Magdala on the Lake of Galilee, a town of bad reputation according to some late authorities. Luke states that from her had gone forth seven demons, and that she was one of the band of women who accompanied Jesus in the last months of His ministry, and ministered to Him of their substance (8: 1–3). Mark and Matthew tell of her watching by the cross and later that day at the tomb.

According to John she came in the dusk of Easter morning to the tomb. Mark, followed by Luke and Matthew, states that other women were with her, and perhaps John indicates this in the use of the plural in her report, "We know not where they have laid him." She would not venture alone outside the city walls, and the task she contemplated would require the aid of others. The women came expecting to find a closed tomb and within it, if they could gain entrance, a corpse bearing marks of dissolution, despite the spices in which it was wrapped. Instead they found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty, naturally going into it to make certain. Whereupon Mary hurried off to find Peter and John, whose whereabouts she knew, while the others remained waiting their arrival. Suddenly these women, standing by or in the tomb, were aware of the presence of one or more angels, and received from them a message of the resurrection which they hastened to bear to the disciples, not daring to speak to anyone on the way. Matthew tells of an appearance of Jesus to them as they were returning but, for reasons we shall consider later, this is thought to be his version of the appearance to Mary on her second visit to the tomb.

Mary found John in the home to which he had taken the mother of Jesus on Friday; and, if Peter was not there, he was not far away. The startling news she brought sent the two men running to the tomb. John, the younger, outstripped his companion but hesitated to enter the resting-place of the dead. Peter felt no such restraint, and entering began a search for some clue to the grave-robbers, a search in which John then joined. What they saw puzzled them. The body was gone, but here were the linen cloths lying in place exactly as if the flesh which they once unfolded had dissolved and left them undisturbed. And close by, having rolled away, was the cloth in which the head had been swathed, empty but not collapsed. What did this mean? No friend would carry off the corpse without its wrappings: no enemy or robber would or could leave them in such a remarkable condition. The two men look at each other in bewilderment. Slowly in the mind of the younger there arises the conviction that here is something supernatural. The words of Jesus come to his recollection with new meaning: He is risen, as He foretold. But how, and in what form? This is something different from the resurrection of Lazarus. What is it? The tomb shows nothing that helps solve the mystery, and to linger within it is idle. So they return to their lodgings, wondering at that which has come to pass and expecting, they cannot say what. No Old Testament predictions of the resurrection aid them in their perplexity, for as yet they do not understand them (John 20:9).

The next picture we have of Mary she is standing by the tomb. Usually she is supposed to have hurried back to it along with Peter and John, arriving somewhat later because she was out of breath from her run to find them. More probably she waited their return and report. There was nothing she could do, if she went back. She supposed the women she had left at the tomb were still there; and she would be eager to tell the mother of Jesus and the others about the morning's discovery. Again, when Peter and John did return, they brought no fresh inducement for her to revisit the tomb: better stay and try to comfort the sorrowful mother in this new chapter of the tragedy of her Son.

Meanwhile, the women who received the message from the angels carried it to the other disciples, so far as they could be found. They would not seek Peter and John first because they knew that Mary had gone to find them: so it might be some time before the tidings brought by the women would reach the little circle in the home of John. The other disciples refused to believe what the women told. That the tomb was empty seemed not improbable: the hatred of Jesus which had brought about His crucifixion might even go to the extreme of dragging forth His corpse for horrible insults; but the story about the angels they deemed the figment of over-excited minds. When it reached Peter and John they,—or at least Peter—would receive it with similar incredulity, especially as they had been at the tomb and experienced nothing of the sort. But it would be an incentive to Mary to repeat her visit, with the hope that she, too, might share in the revelation of the angels. She comes and looks into the tomb: it remains as when first she saw it,—neither angels nor the precious body are there. At loss what next to do, she stands by the entrance weeping. Again, she stoops and looks in, and now her eyes are opened to see two angels sitting there by the place where the body had lain. She is not startled: it was what she was longing for. And when they ask, "Woman, why are you weeping?" her reply is a simple statement of what is uppermost in her mind: " Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Before the angels can speak again, Jesus Himself takes charge. Because she loved most she shall be given first His revelation. She becomes conscious that someone is standing behind her; and, turning with eyes blinded with tears, naturally supposes she sees the man in charge of the garden. In response to His " Why do you weep? Whom do you seek? " she breaks out with the entreaty, " If you have carried him off, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Then comes the glad recognition, when Jesus calls her by name, " Mary."

The command which follows, " Touch me not," is somewhat puzzling; indeed, the latest commentator queries whether the text may not have been changed from " Do not fear," though there is no evidence for such a change. The Greek might best be translated, " Do not be taking hold on me," which would indicate that Mary at once had impulsively grasped His arm or clasped His feet. It was a perfectly natural act; when there stood before her one whom she had thought to see no more,—not an act of worship or in satisfaction of doubt but the instinctive endeavour to retain Him with her. Jesus calmed her fear of losing Him, by saying, " I am not yet ascended to the Father." This has a much more definite meaning to us than to Mary because in our thought, as not in hers, the ascension is a particular event. Christ had spoken more than once about His going to the

Father at the close of His earthly mission; and that is all that the ascension, the going up, would mean to any of the disciples. There was no suggestion of the glorification which later thought has connected with it. " I have not yet ascended " was simply the assurance " I have not yet left you," and the command to bear a message to His disciples is sufficient reason why she must not prolong the present meeting. Mary was to see Him again, and more than once: now she must hasten to tell the others how she had met the Lord and what He had said: " Go to my brethren, and say to them, I am ascending unto my Father and your Father and my God and your God." This would explain to them the meaning of being with them now; it was the last mile of the road He had told them He must travel,—the final stage of His earthly journey and work. In this message He joins Himself more closely with His disciples than ever before. He had called them servants and, later on, friends: now for the first time He calls them brethren. And while He does not say " Our Father and our God," for His relationship to God must ever be different from theirs, He does place them as near Himself as possible.

Mary promptly obeyed the command of her Lord. What effect her story produced, we are not told. There is no hint that it was received with doubt: but it was a woman's tale, which was greatly against it, and since Jesus had not been seen by Peter and John when they went to the tomb, there was double reason to treat it as an hallucination. Some of the disciples may have been roused to visit the tomb themselves, only to find nothing more than had Peter and John (Luke 24: 24). What else might or should be done, they could not determine. All was suspense and expectation.

"He appeared to Cephas" (I Cor. 15: 5); so Paul begins his list of the appearances, disregarding that to the Magdalene as of minor importance. "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon" (Luke 24: 34); thus the Eleven greeted the two from Emmaus on Easter evening, stating what had finally convinced them that the resurrection was a fact. These two references are all we know about the appearance to Peter. The message of the angel, "Go, tell his disciples and Peter" (Mark 16: 7) creates the supposition that in the lost conclusion of Mark there was something about Peter and his Lord; but if it was of special interest, we might expect a repetition of it in Matthew or Luke. Probably Peter gave to no one the details of that interview: they were too intimate and sacred. The time must have been well on in the forenoon or later; for the two who went to Emmaus that afternoon had heard only of the experiences of the women and possibly of Mary. The place, we may think, was some room in Jerusalem where Peter had found shelter since the night of the denial. The interview must be left to imagination.

Peter ever rushed to extremes. Before the arrest of Jesus he was ready to declare that even if all the others forsook Him, he would remain faithful: now in the depths of self-condemnation for his denial he would feel that he had cut himself off forever from the number of those whom Jesus had chosen. The message of the angel, "Tell his disciples and Peter," seemed to be a clear recognition of the separate position in which he stood. Mary's report that she had seen the Lord might kindle in others the desire for a like experience; but the thought of meeting Him face to face filled Peter with shame and dread. He could not believe that Jesus was risen: he was not sure that he wanted to believe it.

To Peter in this frame of mind Jesus appeared. In the interview that followed, broken words of confession must have replaced the curses of denial and the tears of shame; and in Jesus' words to Peter there would be an echo of His words to another, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, sin no more." There must have been also a repetition or reminder of the command given at the Last Supper, "Do thou, when once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). Peter now has a special mission; and when the hour with his Lord is ended, he hastens to perform it. He seeks out the others to tell them that the Lord is risen indeed, and has met and talked with him. This testimony has a weight which that of Mary could not have. It is spread from group to group of the disciples, and leads them to come together where they may have it confirmed. Perhaps the Lord told Peter to assemble them. And, when thus assembled, as they mark in Peter the transformation from sorrow to joy, from fear to hope and confidence, their own despair is banished, and the light of the resurrection dawns upon their darkness. Jesus has conquered death. What next?

Meanwhile, two other disciples are having a wondrous experience. Who they were, it is idle to surmise. We only know that the name of one was Cleopas and that they were on their way to Emmaus, a village which, Luke says, was about eight miles from Jerusalem. It is well to remind ourselves from time to time that the circle of Jesus' followers included many others besides the Twelve. Cleopas and his companion may have been members of the group of Galileans; or they may have been disciples who, like those at Bethany, had a permanent home in Judea. The latter seems more probable because they show no sense of fear mingled with their sorrow: indeed, they may have been to Jerusalem that morning to attend the temple service and, meeting some of the other disciples, have thus heard of the reports of the women and the visit of Peter and John to the tomb. Now they are on their way back to Emmaus, sad at heart and sorely perplexed. Jesus, as a fellow traveller, joins them and with sympathetic questions prompts them to open their thoughts to Him. It is the mystery of the cross, as well as the tragedy of it, that weighs upon them. Why should He upon whom they had centered their hopes as Redeemer of Israel, perish thus foully? The answer of Jesus is that the Messiah is under a divine necessity to suffer such things, even as the Scriptures foretell. And the rest of their journey together is given to His interpretation of the Old Testament teachings concerning Himself. It must have been a wonderful exposition of prophecy, holding them spell-bound until they reached their destination. Would that they had preserved it and passed it down to us!

Why did they fail to recognize Him? Luke's explanation is, "Their eyes were holden," meaning apparently that they were supernaturally kept in ignorance. The compiler of the conclusion of Mark supposes "He was manifested in another form." Others have conjectured that they were not so familiar with Him as to recognize Him when they were absorbed in their sorrow and later in His exposition of the Scriptures. Perhaps Luke's explanation is best. For, if they were to give their attention to the lessons He would impart, it was necessary to avoid the excitement surely arising if He was recognized. It did arise when, accepting their urgent invitation to share their evening meal, He took the bread, blessed and brake it, and gave it to them. Why the recognition then? Had they been with Him at some other meal where He presided in like manner? Or had they learned from one of the Twelve about the Last Supper, and now heard Him say again, "Take, eat, this is my body"? Or, as He broke the bread, did they for the first time get sight of the print of the nails in His hands? Luke says, "He was known of them in the breaking of the bread," a statement that would indicate recognition by some act or word; but he also says, "Their eyes were opened," which may mean the removal of some supernatural restraint. Our only interest in the matter is its bearing upon a question we must discuss later, viz., Was each post-resurrection meal of the Lord with His disciples a sacramental one?

On Easter evening the apostles and other disciples were assembled in some room in Jerusalem, possibly that where the Last Supper was eaten. The doors were closed lest an enemy should hear their excited talk which centered upon the appearance to Peter. That Christ had risen they could not doubt when the testimony of the leading apostle was added to that of the Magdalene; but what did His resurrection mean, and how and where could they once more meet Him? To the room came the two from Emmaus, hurrying to tell that Jesus had walked and talked with them and, when at last they recognized Him, had vanished immediately. If they had feared that their story would not be believed, they found the fear needless; for they were greeted with the cry, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." And in the midst of the eager conversation which followed, suddenly Jesus was standing among them and quietly greeted them with the usual Jewish salutation, "Peace to you." No wonder such a supernatural entrance filled them with terror, and they thought they saw and heard a ghost. Even Peter and the two from Emmaus must have been shaken. Jesus calms their fears, assuring them it is really

He and in the flesh; and when this still seems beyond belief, He asks for food and eats it before them. The act convinces even the most sceptical: ghosts do not eat. Jesus, in very truth, is back with them again,—the same Jesus who was crucified. The wonder at it abides, but new emotions crowd to the front. If He has conquered death, the curse of the cross is gone, all doubts of His Messiahship vanish, He is not only Lord but the Prince of life. The lifting of the darkness reveals to them a new world whose horizon stretches immeasurably far. With a risen Christ what is there they cannot do? Now they are ready for new instructions, the first of those that shall constitute their great commission. So He begins to teach them: what He taught, both now and in the days that followed, we shall consider later.

The manifestation of Jesus on that Easter evening was convincing proof that Jesus was Lord of death as well as of life. But why was that manifestation limited to the little group of those who loved Him? Why did He not present Himself publicly to all Jerusalem, and thus confound His enemies and compel them to accept His claims? The answer is easy. Though confounded they would not be converted. Appearing once more alive from the dead would not change their firm belief that He was in league with Satan and worked His miracles by diabolic power: it would only make them think Him more powerful and diabolic than they had supposed. And as regards the fickle populace, they would indeed again hail Him as Messiah with even wilder enthusiasm than on Palm Sunday; but their selfish conceptions of what the Messiah was to be and do would not be transformed. More strongly than ever they would demand that He drive out the Romans, set up an earthly kingdom, and gratify their thirst for sensuous delights. Jerusalem would be filled with an excitement in which there was nothing spiritual, nothing that would promote the Kingdom He sought to establish.

A problem causing endless discussion is the nature of the body in which Jesus appeared to His disciples. Unquestionably the gospels represent it as in many respects the same as the body that hung upon the cross and was laid in the tomb. It bears marks of the nails and the spear; and with it Jesus speaks in familiar tones and partakes of food. Yet, according to the same gospels, it is a body that can be made to enter a closed room, and to become visible or invisible, and—so the grave-clothes indicate,—came forth from its wrappings in the tomb not by laying them aside but rather in some way passing through them. All this is most perplexing. Those who maintain that the appearances of Jesus were purely spiritual visions explain the statements about His body as later fabrications made to satisfy hearers who would not be content with anything other than an appearance in the flesh. But would belief be aided by adding such puzzling, strange and contradictory details? Would not any later change be just the reverse—an omission of these details from the original account, because they are so hard to accept? A story somewhat like that of Lazarus or else one entirely filled with supernatural glory and power would more readily gain credence.

Until very recently what the gospels narrate about the post-resurrection body of Jesus would be confidently pronounced contrary to the established laws of matter. We are not so ready to say this to-day. Our present conception of matter is that it is a form of centralized energy, nearest akin to electric energy; and there is nothing incredible or even contrary to experience in its being at one time visible and again invisible. That a human body can be made to vanish and reappear, especially without the loss of the life of its possessor, is confessedly beyond all present and, probably, all future powers of science. We must continue to call it a miracle. But it does not seem so utterly at variance with natural law as once it did. We note such power of Christ over His body in the public ministry when He walked upon water (Mark 6: 48) and when He became invisible, " hid Himself," in the midst of the furious mob of the temple (John 8: 49). We may look upon it as the use of the forces of Nature by one who is complete master of them, and thus transfer our astonishment from the act to Him who performed it. Of course, if we turn from physics to philosophy and adopt " the idealistic view of matter as only the expression of mind and will," such a manifestation of Himself by such a one as Jesus becomes perfectly credible. But this whole subject of the post-resurrection body must be considered again later on.

One question still remains. A meaningless miracle is incredible: why, then, should Jesus thus appear to His disciples in bodily form and in such remarkable ways? He was desirous to convince them that, despite the cross and the tomb, He was back with them again, the same friend and guide and teacher, though now the triumphant lord of life and death. This fact was so wonderful, so incredible, that it had to be taught in the most unmistakable way. They must see Him as before: must touch Him, talk with Him, walk with Him, eat with Him, before they could feel that in very truth He was with them as of old. It may seem a childish way of convincing them; but in this unprecedented matter they were like children, and needed the evidence of their senses before they could grasp a great spiritual truth. And in like manner He was teaching them that He was with them always, even when they saw Him not. This was the lesson in the sudden appearances and disappearances. When they were questioning whether indeed He had risen, or were trying to convince another that they themselves had not been mistaken, or were busy with everyday pursuits, or had gathered in expectancy according to His command, or were settling down in a new home for new duties, suddenly they saw Him present with them. And then, when He had dispelled their doubts, or encouraged their hopes or given some lesson greatly needed, as suddenly He was no longer visible. In this way they came to feel that He was ever near,—to be conscious of His constant presence. And when at the end of forty days of such training, they knew that they would no longer see Him, there was no sense of real separation. They had learned the blessedness of those who believe even though they see not. Then the physical body which Jesus had used was no more needed; it could go back into the unseen forces of nature. Whether once more it was revealed to Saul the persecutor, we shall consider later on.

V. THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED

THE FORTY DAYS are divided into three distinct periods by the sojourn of the disciples first in Jerusalem, then in Galilee and again in Jerusalem. Each period at longest was brief, especially as the journey to Galilee and return would consume nearly or quite a week. And the days were not so carefree and suited to meditation as some writers picture them. The life of the disciples was undergoing a complete transformation, involving further lessons from the Great Teacher, new plans for future work and a necessary change of permanent residence from Galilee to Jerusalem. The time was short for all that had to be learned and done.

We should expect the disciples immediately after Easter to hasten to their families and friends in the North carrying the wonderful news of the resurrection, and planning for the removal to Jerusalem. Instead, if the appearance to Thomas was,—as it seems to have been—in the room where the others had met with Jesus on Easter evening, they tarried in the city until another Sunday or longer. Why this delay? The usual explanation is that the others were not willing to go without Thomas, and he would not leave until he was convinced by a physical test that the appearances they reported were not hallucinations. This is not very satisfactory. Why would Thomas care to remain in the city, if he thought his companions were mistaken? And why would they suppose that, if he and they waited there long enough, Jesus would grant a special appearance to him? Indeed, a number of questions arise concerning Thomas. Why was he not with the others on Easter evening? Had he fled from the city? If so, when did he rejoin them? Why must eight days pass before Jesus could or would dispel his doubt? To ask is idle because no answer is available. It is easy to imagine him fleeing to the home of some friend, who had no connection with the disciples or belief in Jesus, and remaining there physically or spiritually prostrated much of the seven days; but there is nothing to support this. Enough to know that when the Lord whom he loved most deeply did appear to him, full belief and deepest adoration were created, apparently without the test he proposed, and to the Beatitudes was added a new one, "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed."

Perhaps the apostles felt they ought to remain in Jerusalem until the end of the feast that Jesus had brought them up to attend which, beginning on Friday evening as the Passover, was continued the next seven days as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. During its first two days they had been kept from taking any part in it, but now the fear was gone that had held them in hiding, and they could mingle freely with the worshippers in the temple. Really it had been a needless fear; the rulers, having disposed of the Leader, would pay little attention to His followers; and the common people in a natural reaction from the murderous mood of Friday might regard them even with pity and somewhat of favour. Here we may discover another reason why Jesus did not manifest Himself publicly. We have already seen that it would have produced no good effect: His enemies would be only the more hostile, and all others the more clamorous for loaves and fishes. To this may we not add that His public appearance would inevitably involve the disciples in the hatred or wild excitement it must cause? Every movement of theirs would be watched, every action noted by friends and foes, thus rendering impossible any preparation for future work.

Moreover, if Jesus wished to teach the Eleven the many things they needed to know, when was there a more fit and convenient time to begin than the present? Before they went back to Galilee they ought to have their future work clearly in mind; for when there they would have to make the needful preparations for it. There, too, they would be scattered more or less as they sought out their homes and loved ones. In Jerusalem they were together, isolated as strangers are in a great city, and having little to do beyond attending the morning and evening services in the temple. So, when the excitement of Easter Day was over, they could settle down to the lessons their Teacher wished to impart. Each day by fresh instruction from Him or meditation upon what He had already given they would make progress in grasping the things concerning Himself and His Kingdom; and when the time came for their departure from the city they would be far more advanced in spiritual knowledge than when they entered it on Palm Sunday.

When considering the Galilean portion of the Forty Days we must bear in mind that the Twelve were not the only companions of Jesus during His public ministry. This is shown by the fact that when the apostles wished to fill the vacant place of Judas they had no difficulty in finding two men, apparently selected from a larger number, " that have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning with the baptism of John " (Acts 1: 21f.). Some of these companions were women (Luke 8: 2f.); all of them probably were Galileans and formed, with others from the same land, the greater part of the group of one hundred and twenty persons who were gathered at Jerusalem, waiting for Pentecost (Acts 1: 15). We can hardly imagine that they all, especially the women, journeyed to Galilee, if they were shortly to come back to Jerusalem and make their homes there. Better let the apostles and certain of the men go, while the rest waited their return and the arrival of those who might come with them. For those who stayed there was much to do in finding permanent homes for all.

When the apostles and whoever had accompanied them were once more in Galilee, every day and hour had its task waiting them. The news of the crucifixion of Jesus certainly had preceded them, for it would spread like wildfire over Palestine, and bring dismay to all who loved Him. The band from Jerusalem must first seek out these faithful followers, rekindle their extinguished hopes, and rouse them to undertake the future mission of proclaiming a risen Christ. To convince them that Jesus really was alive again must have been no easy matter. We may suppose that one purpose of His appearance to James and also to the five hundred at this time was to help produce this conviction. Then, when the believers were persuaded to abandon Galilee for Jerusalem, there were houses and lands to be sold, articles to be packed for transportation, beasts of burden to be secured, farewells to be taken,—a host of matters to occupy each day of the three weeks that were available. The exodus of so large a company was no small undertaking.

It has often been said that the apostles, either because they had little else to do, or because they had to earn a living, resumed their old occupation as fishermen. This seems improbable, and certainly is not proved by the fact that seven of them were out together one night catching, or rather trying to catch, fish (John 21: 3f.). Most of us know the urge that made Peter, after a day of distracting work, impulsively announce, "I am off to fish," and why his companions promptly responded, "We too go with you." But when these men were out upon the water in the night, with the silent stars above them and the friendly hills shutting them in, did the thought arise that after all it might be better to go back to the old peaceful life than to press into the new? This would be very natural. And perhaps it is one reason for the special appearance of Jesus to them.

In the grey dawn of the morning they saw a stranger standing on the shore. The marvelous draught of fishes, which followed His hail and direction where to cast their net, made them recognize their Lord; for it wakened memories of another like draught when He first called them to become fishers of men. The meal, also, to which He invited them recalled another meal where He was the host, and Peter had stoutly declared, and the others had echoed his valiant assertion, "If I must die with thee, I will not deny thee" (Mark 14: 31). Jesus needed to do nothing this time to prove that it was really He: the previous appearances had ended all doubt. Now He seemed rather to guard against too great familiarity. He stood apart while they pulled the net on shore and counted the catch and, at His command, brought some of the fish to be cooked. Then He bade them to breakfast and in silence distributed the food, while they, as on certain other occasions (Mark 10: 32; Luke 9: 45), solemnized by His attitude and bearing, did not venture to address Him, though they knew it was the Lord.

When He did speak, His thrice repeated question to Peter "Lovest thou me?", undoubtedly had connection with the thrice repeated denials by that apostle. With the past thus strongly brought to mind, He pointed to the future and its great duty, "Feed my sheep." What did that command involve? It was addressed to Peter, and though all must have felt it reached to them, it concerned him primarily. Was it simply a reminder of a mission he had felt tempted to abandon? Was it a public reinstatement of him as an apostle? Did it confer upon him the primacy among the apostles? Or was it indeed his appointment as Vicar of Christ on earth? We leave these questions unanswered because any answer would be acceptable only to those already disposed to accept it. We note, however, that the writer of the Fourth Gospel tells of this appearance, not to explain Peter's position but to account for a report which had been spread abroad that John was to remain alive until his Lord's return.

There may have been other appearances in Galilee, but only one is reported. It was upon "the mountain," and we naturally think of the mountain where the Twelve were selected to be apostles.

Matthew mentions only the Eleven as present: but his statement that when they saw Jesus "some doubted," indicates the presence of others; for with the Eleven doubt had already been changed into certainty. We may, therefore, identify this appearance with the one St. Paul says was to above five hundred brethren at once, the greater number of whom were still alive when he wrote (I Cor. 15: 6). It was a meeting Jesus had appointed, and to attend which the apostles had been commanded to go into Galilee (Matt. 28: 7; Mark 16: 7). It was intended for all the faithful Galileans, those who questioned His resurrection as well as those who fully believed. When they saw Him in the distance, some knelt in worship, others hesitated: but when He came and stood in their midst all doubt must have disappeared.

Then followed an informal address or conversation, of which we have only the outline. There is a universal tone throughout it,—" all authority, all the nations, all things, all the days." Evidently it was meant not for the Eleven alone, nor simply for the five hundred, but for His followers everywhere and "until the consummation of the age." The commission which had been given to the apostles at Jerusalem was now given to all. The most remarkable part of the address is the declarations of Jesus concerning Himself: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth," —no statement could be more sweeping and to human thought staggering: " I am with you always even unto the end of the world," no promise has brought more cheer and strength to every one of His followers. This revelation of Jesus on the Mount gives the key-note to the apostolic testimony concerning Him. "Except as risen and exalted they never preached Jesus at all." Here we have the transition in their thought from the humiliation to the exaltation of our Lord. That which was only dimly guessed at intervals (*e. g.* Thomas' confession) becomes now their clear and abiding conception of their Lord.

Paul in his list of the appearances gives one to James which he places after that to the five hundred. There are several James in New Testament history, but this is generally agreed to be "James, the Lord's brother" (Gal. 1: 19), known as James the Just, who became the recognized head of the church in Jerusalem, which would explain why Paul includes the appearance to him in his brief list. John says that a few months before the death of Jesus His brethren did not believe on Him (John 7: 5): hence it is supposed that this appearance was intended to create belief in James and the others, and lead them to cast their lot in with the disciples. But, as with that to Peter, we know nothing about it except the bare fact.

The Forty Days draw to a close. Again the Eleven are back in Jerusalem, and with them now are their families and many of the Galileans, notably the brothers of Jesus. The city is not as crowded as in the feast seasons, and they have found lodgings and some means of earning enough for their simple wants. The apostles still form a distinct group, and have as their gathering place "the upper chamber" (Acts 1: 13),—possibly the room sacred with many associations. They seem a pathetic little group, these Nazarenes who have come here to undertake the winning of the world for their Lord. How feeble they are! Doubtless, so far as their presence attracted any attention, it drew forth a smile of pity or a shrug of contempt. In such an atmosphere their own faith would be stifled; and there would be much to make them lose courage. They are simply to wait, they dimly realize for what; and waiting is the most trying of work. We are not surprised, then, that Jesus granted them another appearance.

Once more they are together at a supper made sacred by the presence of their Lord (Acts 1: 4). It is, though as yet they know this not, a farewell meal. There is much they have to ask Him; some answers can be granted but some He must withhold. Especially it is not well for them to know how soon His kingdom will be established. If the years of slow progress were revealed, the discouragement would be too great. But He maps out the spread of that kingdom in an ever widening circle from Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the earth. And He charges them to abide in Jerusalem, cheering them by telling that before many days they shall receive a further baptism with the Holy Ghost, through which they shall gain the power they need for witness bearing. Then, as once before, He leads them out to the Mount of Olives; but this time He passes beyond the olive orchard up to the crest of the hill and onward toward Bethany. And there in some quiet spot He gives His last instructions and, stretching out His hands in benediction, rises from the earth till a cloud veils Him from their sight. The Forty Days are ended. Henceforth they are to think of their Lord as seated in glory at the right hand of God on high. They linger, hoping for His reappearance, until two angels, as on the Easter morning at the beginning of this wonderful period, bring them a message, telling their hope cannot be realized, but that there shall some day be a return "in like manner" (not in like form) as the present departure. Then with no sad sense of separation, for the lesson of His perpetual presence has been firmly grasped, and with great joy that their Lord has entered into His rest, they return to Jerusalem.

The ascension, unlike the resurrection, is rarely mentioned in the apostolic teaching. But the fact that their Lord is in the heavens with all power and majesty is constantly recognized and emphasized from the sermon at Pentecost onward. What the ascension meant to Jesus Himself, beyond being the close of the ministry in the flesh, and the beginning of the ministry in the Spirit, we can only surmise. To the disciples, it was the assurance that He had gone to His Father, and they would see Him no more in His earthly form.

VI. THE TEACHING IN THOSE DAYS

MANY WHO accept the resurrection are accustomed to think of the appearances of Jesus as few in number, brief in time, and intended mainly to convince His disciples that He had conquered death and was with them again. But is this correct? Were the appearances few in number? The evangelists tell only a few; but they are equally restricted in telling the rest of the life of Jesus. Their account of the Forty Days is actually more full than of any other period of the same length before the Passion Week. Nor need we conclude that their silence means ignorance. Each writer, as we shall notice later, seems to have recorded only that which suited the special purpose of his gospel. Indeed, we must recognize that the gospels are not narratives but collections of incidents chosen for their lessons.

No evangelist attempted to make a full list of the appearances; neither did Paul, though the contrary is often asserted. He was writing to the Corinthian church of which he had been the pastor for nearly or quite two years, and which must have heard him repeatedly tell about the resurrection, since this was a foremost theme in all his preaching. In the chapter where his list is found (I Cor. 15), he is dealing with their doubts and difficulties concerning the resurrection of the Christian dead; and he begins by reminding them of the accepted and basic facts of their faith. For his purpose it is not necessary to give all the appearances of the risen Christ; a few that carry great weight because either to prominent persons or to a large number at once are sufficient. He does not give the one to Mary,—a woman's experience might be doubted; nor that to the two at Emmaus,—they were obscure individuals: but he does name that to James, the head of the Jerusalem church, though the evangelists make no mention of it.

In the gospels (disregarding Mark, whose original ending is lost) we find only four appearances after Easter. We might expect each evangelist to narrate all these four, they seem to us so wonderful; but the fact is that Matthew and Luke were content with one each and John added the other two. May there not, therefore, have been other appearances which none of the evangelists put in his record? Luke speaks as if he knew of others (Acts 1: 3) and so does John (20: 30). Certainly, since Easter Day was so full of manifestations of His presence, the contrast would have been great and depressing if Jesus had appeared but four times during the weeks that followed. The disciples needed Him both for encouragement and for instruction in their new way; and only by repeated revelations of His presence could they gain the strengthening assurance that He was always with them. With good reason, therefore, Dr. Sanday says, "It is probable that even when all the recorded appearances are put together they would not exhaust all those that were experienced."

Again, is there any ground for believing that the appearances were brief in time,—mere fleeting manifestations accompanied with a few impressive words? Such, indeed, were those to Mary and to Saul of Tarsus; but the others, so far as they are described, were not of that character. The afternoon walk to Emmaus with its exposition of the Old Testament prophecies, the breakfast beside the Lake with the conversation that followed it, the address on the mountain in Galilee, the evening in the upper chamber and the final walk from Jerusalem almost to Bethany,—to speak of these as momentary, flitting, brief, is to reject the record and ignore the probabilities. The needs of His disciples called for prolonged intercourse, and we may with assurance believe that it was granted, though at the longest each interview must have seemed short.

What, then, was Jesus doing in these precious hours that He spent with His disciples after the resurrection? Luke's answer is that He was speaking "the things concerning the Kingdom of God" or, as Moffatt translates it, "discussing the affairs of God's realm." This is indicated in what we have preserved of His sayings in that period, and is probable from what we know of the disciples. They were to be His witnesses, testifying both to His resurrection and to His exaltation as Prince and Saviour and Judge of the quick and the dead (Acts 1: 8; 5: 32; 10: 36f.; Luke 24: 48). By them His gospel was to be preserved and proclaimed. How poorly prepared they were for this tremendous task! The Holy Spirit was to be their teacher, bringing to remembrance all that Jesus had said to them (John 14: 26), but there was much of greatest importance not yet waiting for such illumination because not yet spoken when He died.

We have pointed out in a previous chapter how ignorant the disciples were when their Master was taken from them: how much they were not prepared to learn, and how much was not yet prepared for them to learn. The limitations that restricted Jesus during the public ministry are expressed in His sayings, "What I do thou knowest not now" and "I have yet many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now" (John 13: 7; 16: 12f.). After the resurrection these limitations were largely removed. The disciples would listen with increased eagerness and receptivity; and light from the open tomb streamed back upon the cross, the garden, the supper and all the past ministry and teachings. Now He could give them clearly the truths they must grasp before they could proclaim Him the Saviour of the world and establish His Kingdom. "We are justified in the conclusion," says Dr. Briggs, "that we must assign no inconsiderable proportion of the teachings of Jesus to His appearances after the resurrection. It is upon the experiences of these forty days as well as upon the year and a half of the previous ministry of Jesus that the faith and life of the Apostolic Church were grounded."

What Jesus taught the disciples in these hours of intercourse must mainly be inferred from what we know of their needs and what later on they themselves taught; but some of it is preserved in the post-resurrection story, and perhaps other portions are inserted in the earlier part of the gospels. The authors of Matthew and Luke, so scholars generally hold, had as one of their sources a collection of the sayings of Jesus, grouped somewhat according to topics and giving little or no indication of the occasions on which they were spoken. If it contained teachings given after the resurrection, these could not or would not be distinguished from the rest and would be placed among them in the gospel story. As for the Fourth Gospel, its author aimed to set forth the full meaning of Jesus' words as it had dawned upon him through long years of increasing spiritual comprehension; and in such an endeavour he would not hesitate to put together what was given at widely different times, if it all bore upon the same subject.

The first task of the risen Christ was to help His disciples over the stumbling-block of the cross. Death by crucifixion was, as we have noted, unspeakably horrible to the Jews, not merely because it was so full of physical torture but mainly because it was regarded as a proof of divine wrath against the sufferer, according to the old pronouncement, "He that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut. 21: 23; Gal. 3: 13). Our failure to realize this makes us miss the climax of horror in the statement of Cleopas and his companion, "The chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him" (Luke 24: 20). Probably it was this significance of the cross that kept Jesus from telling His disciples that His death was to be by crucifixion. Also, His command to take up the cross and follow Him would be so mysterious and repulsive before He was crucified and thereby changed the symbolism of the cross from divine wrath to redeeming sacrifice, that we are forced to treat it as a post-resurrection saying, inserted among the earlier teachings because it best expresses the law of a Christlike life.

"Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24: 26). Thus Jesus on Easter afternoon began His lesson concerning the cross,—a lesson continued the same evening in the upper room. With words that fired their hearts He explained the prophecies about Himself, "Thus it is written"; the divine necessity that had been laid upon Him, "Thus it behooved the Christ to suffer"; and the redemption wrought by His death, "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations" (Luke 24: 46–47). It is this lesson and doubtless others like it that explain to us what otherwise has no explanation, how Peter at Pentecost could point out the fulfilment in Jesus of the Messianic prophecies, and a little later could hold Him up to the people in Solomon's porch and to the rulers in the Sanhedrin as the only one in whom there is salvation. The baptism of the Holy Spirit gave Peter power for witness-bearing, but the truths to which he bore witness had to be imparted by the Risen Lord.

Likewise, it was the revelation of the meaning of His crucifixion given them by the Risen Christ that made all the disciples eager to proclaim the cross as the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was another subject needing explanation from Jesus. His acts and words as He instituted it must have been mysterious and almost meaningless to the Twelve. If to-day we believe that their deepest meaning has hardly been grasped, what could they signify before His death? Since that Last Supper was so important that He could say, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22: 15), could He leave them to find out with difficulty, if at all, its true significance? That the disciples from the very beginning of the church considered the frequent or perhaps daily celebration of the eucharist to be an important part of the Christian life is shown in the record of the days immediately following Pentecost (Acts 2: 42, 46). The new converts continue steadfastly in "the apostles' teaching and fellowship," in "the breaking of bread" (the usual term for the eucharist) and in "the prayers"; and "breaking bread at home" in connection with their daily meals is placed alongside of their worship in the temple. Surely all this could not have come about by unaided meditation upon the significance of the words and acts of their Master in the upper room, especially as the days between Easter and Pentecost were filled with other duties that left little time for meditation: Jesus must have given them the needed instruction, though we have no record of His teachings unless some are given by John in his account of the discourse, truly sacramental, after the feeding of the five thousand.

And how would the apostles even think of changing the meal from an annual one, as the Passover supper was, to a frequent one unless they had His authority or example for so doing? We can find indications that Jesus repeated the sacrament with His disciples after His resurrection. He was made known to the two at Emmaus in "the breaking of the bread" (Luke 24: 35); Peter tells Cornelius how they "ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead" (Acts 10: 41): and the alternative reading of Acts 1: 4 is "eating with them." Such meals must have had a sacramental nature; and by them the disciples would learn to use the sacrament often in their recognition of spiritual union with Him. Shall we find in these occasions the fulfilment of His prediction at the Last Supper, "I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26: 29; Luke 22: 16)?

The other sacrament is baptism. It was used as the initial rite of church membership even on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 38, 41). Where did the apostles get it? In certain current heathen religions there were baptisms in water or blood; but all things heathen would be an abomination to them. The Jews had ceremonial washings; but

Jesus taught that they were of no spiritual value. John the Baptist made baptism a main feature of his work; and some of the Twelve had been his disciples, and independently of him had baptized under the superintendence of Jesus (John 1: 35; 4: 2); but John's baptism, though similar in form to the Christian, was far different in meaning, and could not be regarded as its equivalent (Acts 19: 3–5). The exhortation of the apostles to the excited hearers at Pentecost, " Repent and be baptized," sounds like an echo of John's preaching; but there is the significant addition " in the name of Jesus," which changes it all. Whence came the change, and the new meaning? They must have come from Jesus Himself.

There is no indication that during the ministry Jesus baptized anyone. Why should He, when His church was not yet founded? Nor do we find Him teaching anything about baptism until after His resurrection; then, so Matthew records, He commanded His followers to make disciples of all nations " baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost " (Matt. 28: 19). We use these words to-day as the regular baptismal formula; but the fact that the early church seems never to have used them has caused doubt and needless discussion about the authenticity of the passage. To summarize the arguments pro and con would require pages. May not the explanation be that the apostles used no prescribed formula because Jesus did not give one? He never laid down binding forms for His followers. Even the

Lord's Prayer is only an illustration, not a formula: "after this manner pray ye," not necessarily "in these words." The statement in Matthew, then, may be intended as a summary of what He taught about baptism and the relation of it to the three Persons of the Trinity. There certainly was need of such instruction, since without it baptism could hardly have assumed the importance it did at once in the life of the church, and would have had a meaning scarcely beyond that of John's baptism. That even after He had taught them they comprehended the full meaning of the sacrament is improbable. Christian experience and the illumination of the Holy Spirit were necessary for this. But the post-resurrection teachings of Jesus were the seed without which there would have been no harvest or many tares.

A matter of deepest interest to the apostles, and concerning which they must have questioned their Lord eagerly and often was the work that lay before them. Like Paul, when confronted by the risen Christ, they could not but ask, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22: 10). At more than one interview He gave the answer. As Garvie states it, "Their calling was to be that of 'witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth' (Acts 1: 8). They were to continue His work on earth, 'As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you' (John 20: 21). They were being sent as witnesses 'that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem' (Luke 24: 47). Their commission is expressly set forth in the words, 'Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you' (Matt. 28: 19, 20). Their authority in dealing with the souls of men is to be as Christ's own, 'Whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whosesoever sins ye retain they are retained' (John 20: 23)." When they waited for Pentecostal power, they were not in darkness concerning their future mission; and they began with quiet confidence to make ready for it.

Brief as is the account of the Forty Days we find in it mention of other subjects upon which the apostles, as we have seen, greatly needed instruction. The few words preserved in each instance may rightly be deemed the text of a discourse. Jesus speaks repeatedly of the Holy Spirit, of the power received through His baptism (Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 5, 8), of the spiritual authority possessed by those who received Him (John 20: 21). He gives a new proclamation of His own authority, the most astounding ever (Matt. 28: 18). He speaks things concerning the Kingdom of God (Acts 1: 3). He adds one more to the list of the Beatitudes, that of those who walk by faith and not by sight (John 20: 29). To discuss all of these might be profitable: we certainly should bear them in mind as we think of the post-resurrection teaching; and as we study them we are forced to agree with Swete that " it needs a sturdy scepticism to doubt that words so characteristic of the Great Master are in substance the words of the risen Christ."

The Forty Days brought the consummation of Jesus' revelation of Himself and His saving truths. By His death and resurrection the gospel which the apostles were to preach was made complete, and by His latest teaching it was made clear to them. Just how much He revealed, and how much was withheld because even yet they were not able to bear it and must wait for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, we can only surmise. But they were not suffered to go forth in ignorance, to proclaim a Kingdom whose nature they did not understand, and to meet with difficulties for which they were unprepared. " The things concerning himself " and " the things concerning the Kingdom of God " had been made evident to them.

VII. THE APPEARANCE TO PAUL

" LAST OF all he was seen of me also," says Paul (I Cor. 15: 8). Here is a statement doubly important because unquestionably it is first-hand testimony, and because the claim is made that if Paul testifies to a purely spiritual experience, we may be sure that the experiences of the others, listed by him with his own, were likewise purely spiritual. Certainly no one can think of disputing Paul's direct statement that he had seen Jesus (cf. I Cor. 9: 1), but concerning the nature of his seeing there is endless discussion. What did take place as he drew nigh to Damascus? Let our answer be sought, as hitherto, in confidence that whatever was needed to bring him out of darkness into His marvelous light would be granted by the Lord.

Many scholars maintain that Paul's theology, which has been that of the church generally through later centuries, was not based on the facts of Jesus' life and teachings because he did not know them; and that, therefore, the exalted Redeemer whom he sets before us is a creation of his own philosophical thought quite other than the gentle Galilean of the Synoptic Gospels. But such ignorance in Paul is incredible. After his conversion he could not fail to meet repeatedly persons who had known Jesus; and he tells us that once he made a visit to Jerusalem expressly to interview Peter, and spent fifteen days with him; also, at the same time he saw James, the Lord's brother (Gal. 1: 18f.). Can we suppose that during this visit he never asked them about the earthly life of his Master and especially about the resurrection? It is true that in his epistles there is almost no reference to the incidents and teaching of Jesus in the public ministry; but this is in part because he was writing to Christians already acquainted with them, but mainly because the risen and exalted Christ was ever central in his thought. " Paul's personal knowledge of Christ began with the revelation of Him as the ascended and glorified Lord. By this beginning his modes of thought and manner of speaking of Him would naturally be determined."

Even in the days when he was a persecutor Paul must have known the general facts about Jesus and the substance of the apostolic message. Though he seems to have been absent from Jerusalem when Jesus was there, on his return he found the city filled with this teaching (Acts 5: 28), and the Sanhedrin greatly alarmed by the rapid increase of believers. Both curiosity and zeal would send him in search of information about the new heresy,—information easily secured since, as he himself said to Agrippa, " This thing was not done in a corner " (Acts 26: 26). The person from whom he must have gained most was Stephen, a leader in the early church, a strong speaker and skillful debater, " a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." Stephen boldly proclaimed Christ in the synagogue of " them of Cilicia and Asia "; and as this would be Paul's synagogue when in Jerusalem, we may be sure he heard the deacon evangelist. Impetuous, keen and highly trained, he would be prompt to refute the utterances of Stephen; and there would ensue a battle royal between the Christian official and the brilliant young Pharisee. It might range over all the field of Christian evidence, but no matter at what point it started, it would inevitably come to the empty tomb. Paul's strongest disproof of the claims of Jesus would be their utter collapse by His death on the cross, and Stephen would meet it by pointing to the triumph of the resurrection.

" There is no new thing under the sun," said the Preacher long ago. And the critic is much conceited who thinks he has found an argument against belief in the resurrection that was not brought forward by Paul and answered by Stephen as the debate in the synagogue went on day after day. The question would be concerning a bodily resurrection. As a Pharisee Paul would agree that the soul lives after death, and a spiritual vision of the dead is possible. All devout Jews believed also in the resurrection of the body, but only at the Last Day and (at least this is what Josephus tells of the Pharisees) only of good men. Any other bodily resurrection was incredible except to such a heathen as Herod Antipas, who thought John the Baptist had come back from the dead. Concerning the risen Christ, Stephen probably could not say, "I was one of those who met and talked and ate with him"; but he was in close touch with those who could say this; and he would offer their testimony, omitting that of the women, which would carry little weight, but giving what Peter and the Eleven and James and the more than five hundred brethren had experienced. That list of appearances which Paul tells the Corinthians "I received" (I Cor. 15: 3) may have been gained first from Stephen.

The arguments of Stephen proved unanswerable, but this fact cost him his life. That Paul was one of those who suborned witnesses against him, we cannot believe; but that he deemed the sentence of death a merited one is shown by the part he took in its execution,—"When the blood of Stephen, thy witness, was shed, I also was standing by and consenting and keeping the garments of them that slew him" (Acts 22: 20). Stephen was recognized to be a good man, even if a misguided one; this is shown by the way in which devout Jews mourned his death and gave him honourable burial when the terror-stricken Christians dared not render that last service. And it was impossible to doubt that he thoroughly believed the gospel he preached. Paul felt that a heresy so seductive and powerful as to master such a man must be fought desperately. Persecution seemed the best way to crush it out; terror and torture might bring back to reason these mad followers of the crucified Galilean; and certainly such measures would keep others from joining them. So with an energy which was almost a fury Paul led the persecution that arose after the death of Stephen, forcing himself to a work that must have been repugnant to one of his kindly disposition and keen sympathies. He did it, he tells us afterward, "in all good conscience" (Acts 23: 1; 26: 9), yet the memory of it haunted his later years and made him cry, "I am the chief of sinners." The explanation of this paradox lies in his statement, "I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (I Tim. 1: 13–15). Ignorance kept his conscience from condemning him, but that ignorance was caused by a sinful refusal to believe. The light was clear, but he closed his eyes to it.

Strange as it may seem at first thought, the persecution of the Christians gave to Paul the only comforting sense of divine approval he then enjoyed; with the rest of his life he was thoroughly dissatisfied, and saw no way of making it better. He longed for righteousness, and he believed, as a

Pharisee, that it was to be gained by keeping the law. And because he was honest and sincere, he could not be satisfied with an outward, formal observance,—a matter of meats and dress and fasts and tithes; he sought to keep it with his whole heart, perhaps recognizing, as did the scribe who talked with Jesus, that the two great commandments are Love God and Love your neighbour. But the more earnestly he strove to make his obedience perfect, the more he realized his utter inability. Evil desires, ugly passions, unsuspected failures came to light, until in despair he pronounced himself "sold under sin," and cried "wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of this body of death?" (Rom. 7: 14, 24). He had heard the Christians declare they found peace with God through a righteousness not of the law but of faith, because they had in Jesus not only a Messiah but, far more, a Saviour and Exalted Lord; and certainly Stephen in his death and the persecuted Christians in their sufferings showed that they possessed this peace. But, wretched though he was, and with the wish sometimes rising, "Would that I could be fool enough to hold their creed and find their joy," he had no thought of actually accepting Christ. What! recognize as the Messiah a crucified Galilean? Patriotism, prejudice, pride and all his religious training cried out in horror against it. The cross to Paul was more than a stumbling-block; it was a solid wall with no gateway through it.

What then did Paul need by way of revelation?

An appearance of Jesus in the flesh would not be helpful: he never had seen Him and could not recognize Him; nor did the disciples themselves now think and speak of Him as present with them in His old form. Paul must be convinced that Jesus was, as His disciples proclaimed, the Exalted Messiah, the Divine Lord. He must see what Stephen had seen, the Heavenly Christ, the Glorified Redeemer. And, if the testimony of Luke, who was his convert and companion, is to be believed, this is what he did see. A vision of the Lord emblazed with light supernal overwhelmed him, some gleam of the splendour being caught even by his attendants: and straightway he changed from persecutor to penitent, from a proud Pharisee to a humble member of the despised Christian sect. "Who art thou, Lord?" is his last resistance to the goad he had been fighting. Possibly he still may be mistaken, though he knows before he asks that the answer will be, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

"Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" Paul asks the Corinthians (I Cor. 9: 1): and the Greek negative in the second question shows that he is there asking what everyone agrees is true. At Damascus there had been not only a dazzling light and a voice but also a visible appearance of Christ (Acts 9:17, 27; 22: 14). Paul never describes it: doubtless it was beyond human powers of description. John tried to picture the Son of Man who spoke to him in Patmos; but he had to use symbols so entirely that we gain no clear impression of anything except the glory of Him he saw. Paul makes no such attempt: but he points to this vision of his Lord as the credentials of his apostleship. Along with the Eleven and Matthias he could be a witness to the resurrection because, though he had not like them been with Jesus from the beginning (John 15: 27; Acts 1: 21f.), he had beheld Him in His glorified body triumphant over death.

There was a further revelation of Christ to Paul which came from later experience, a revelation which he describes as not "to me" but "in me" (Gal. 1: 16), and sets forth in a statement that reveals the very heart of his apostolic life, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2: 20). It was the knowledge gained by this inner revelation, as contrasted with what can be given by any visible appearances even of the glorified Christ, that perhaps he indicates in the passage, so much a problem to commentators, "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh yet now we know him so no more" (II Cor. 5: 16). But all this later knowledge of Christ was a continuation of that first revelation at Damascus, and a further manifestation of "the power of his resurrection."

"Last of all as to the one [of the apostles] untimely born, he appeared to me also" (I Cor. 15: 8). So says Paul: and he goes on to explain that he is the least of the apostles, "not meet to be called an apostle," because he persecuted the church of God. He is not assuming this lowest place merely out of humility, or as a fitting atonement for his early career: he is contrasting the way in which he entered the family of Christ with the way of the others. They had passed through the normal stages of discipleship: he had been brought in when yet a persecutor. They had known Jesus in the days of His flesh; Paul had never seen Him. They had been taught by the Great Teacher patiently and little by little, as they were able to receive: Paul had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, a rabbi whose teachings had much in common with those of Jesus, but lacked the supreme lesson. They had so far advanced in their perception of the nature of their Lord that the resurrection appearances brought a full recognition of His deity; Paul, though shaken, was still clinging to his old belief that Jesus was a child of Satan, when the light shone upon him near Damascus, and forced such a recognition. They received their final teachings from the lips of the risen Christ: Paul, asking, " What wilt thou have me to do? ", was sent to Ananias, because he still was in the stage where any faithful Christian could guide him. We can well understand why, when he looked back upon their appointment as witnesses to the resurrection, he would say " The others were full grown babes but I was prematurely born."

II

DIFFICULTIES IN THE DETAILS OF THE STORY

I. THE SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE

IN THE preceding section of this book, I have given the story of the resurrection appearances as the Gospels and Acts offer it, and have rarely paused to discuss a difficulty or seek an answer to an objection. Only thus can justice be done to it: for every digression from the narrative itself, makes us less able to feel its force. But objections and difficulties should not be ignored; and discussion of them cannot well be avoided. Blind belief is as deplorable as obstinate unbelief. So I would now again take up the story, and without narrating the incidents consider briefly the debatable points in each. Much of what follows might have been inserted as footnotes in the first section; but footnotes are an interruption that the general reader dislikes or ignores.

It is well to take a preliminary survey of the sources upon which we must depend for our knowledge of the resurrection. These are the four gospels: for, excepting certain passages in Acts and a brief statement in First Corinthians, there is nothing else that deserves attention as a record of what took place on the first Easter and later. We began our study of the resurrection with the presupposition that the evangelists were honest men, who desired to tell the whole truth, and had no inducement to do otherwise. Of course, if we could go further, and prove that they were divinely inspired in such a way that it was impossible for them even unwittingly to tell anything but the truth and the whole truth, it would be unnecessary to discuss the story they tell, except to assure ourselves that we understand it aright. But there is no proof of such infallibility strong enough to convince any except those who treat doubt as sin. On the other hand, those who assert that the evangelists wrote long after the time of Jesus, and were credulous of every legend that had grown about Him, so that their record is far from trustworthy, cannot put forth even a respectable proof of this assertion; the facts are against it. For those who are still uncertain what opinion to hold, it may be useful to state briefly some of those facts concerning the four gospels, giving only what are generally accepted by leading scholars. I shall state them briefly because they are so well known: and shall specially call attention to the character of each gospel as regards its narrative of the resurrection.

The earliest of the four gospels is Mark, its date usually being placed between 60 and 70 A. D. Tradition, early and generally held to be reliable, says its author was John Mark, the companion of Peter and later of St. Paul, and it is the story of Jesus which he heard Peter tell repeatedly as they went from city to city preaching the gospel. Certainly it is the story of Jesus as one might tell it for evangelistic purposes, emphasizing the miracles to hold the attention of an audience, and picturing in detail the trial and crucifixion to touch their hearts. It gives some of the brief, striking sayings of Jesus, but only a few parables and but one long discourse,—that about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the present age. A street audience would be interested in deeds rather than words. It impresses us as a plain relation of facts, in which the human limitations of Jesus and the defects of the apostles are stated without reserve or apology. In Mark we see Jesus as His disciples saw Him, and the apostles with no saintly robes. Mark in former days was valued less than the other gospels, because it is shorter and contains almost nothing that is not in Matthew or Luke; but to-day we prize it highly as giving most nearly the Oral Tradition, *i. e.* the gospel story as it was told by the apostles and others before anyone thought to put it in writing.

The evangelistic purpose of Mark makes us expect an emphasis of the resurrection; but the book as we now have it tells only of the women coming to the empty tomb and receiving from an angel the message that Jesus is risen and then fleeing with trembling and astonishment; and it stops with the words, " they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid " (16: 8). Could it have ended in this abrupt and unsatisfactory way? A few scholars hold so; but this seems most improbable, unless the author's pen was stopped by death and no one dared even to complete what in the Greek seems to be a broken sentence. The lack of a conclusion was supplied in later days by 16: 9–20 which is awkwardly connected with what precedes, and may have been compiled from the other gospels and Acts. How the original ending, if there was one, came to be lost is a puzzling problem. Was the final section of the roll of papyrus on which the gospel was written detached or made illegible by some accident before any copy was made? This is to suppose that the manuscript was treated with a carelessness or neglect that is incredible. Or was there in the lost conclusion some statement deemed so erroneous or misleading that the church suppressed it? Strange then that no hint of what that statement was can anywhere be found or conjectured. There is a bare possibility that even yet, perhaps in the sands of Egypt which have preserved so many treasures, we may find the solution of the problem.

Meanwhile we can only regret most deeply that for the history of the resurrection Mark can give us little aid. His story of Easter and the days that followed would be most interesting and valuable; for not only was this evangelist the companion of Peter, but his mother's house was in Jerusalem (Acts 12: 12); and the conjecture is that the Last Supper was held in it, and that he was the young man whose narrow escape from arrest is told in 14: 51f. The lost conclusion of Mark, we may confidently conjecture, must have contained an account of an appearance to Peter, otherwise " and Peter " in the message of the angels has no force. Also, the statement " He goeth before you into Galilee," makes us believe that there was some account of an appearance to the disciples in Galilee, though it may not have been the one described in Matthew.

The Third Gospel unquestionably was written by the author of Acts, and most scholars agree that he was Luke, "the beloved physician" of St. Paul. He tells us in its preface how he came to write and sought to make his account full and accurate. He was by nature an historian; and there is reason to believe that after having traced in Acts the progress of the church down to the time of Paul's residence at Rome, he purposed continuing the history in a third volume which, for some reason, possibly his death, was never written. For his gospel, it is supposed, he had two principal sources. One was the gospel of Mark, in either its present or some earlier form, or else the oral tradition which was the basis of Mark. The other was a collection of the sayings of Jesus, arranged more or less according to topics, which he tried to insert where they belonged chronologically. In addition he had from other sources much material, given in no other gospel, which he placed mainly in the middle of his narrative. His account of the resurrection seems to depend upon these sources rather than upon Mark. Our increasing knowledge of the Roman provinces in the first century gives us a fine opportunity to test Luke's accuracy as he describes Paul's journeys through them. And he has stood the test so well that scholars rank him among the most trustworthy of ancient historians. We must, therefore, give great weight to his account of the resurrection, especially as he could not but have met often some of the original witnesses.

The events of Easter Day are given more fully by Luke than by any other of the evangelists. His account, says Selwyn, bears marks of being, not the evidence of one individual, but of different groups in a community given from different points of view and explored and sifted by the evangelist. He seems to have had a special acquaintance with the women, and may have gained his account of the interment of Jesus, and the events on Easter morning from them. He takes evident pains to indicate that the resurrection appearances were of Jesus in the flesh: and he stresses the post-resurrection teachings of Jesus about the necessity of His sufferings and resurrection. Apparently he represents the ascension as taking place at the end of Easter evening, a matter we must discuss later. To the gospel we must add the opening verses of Acts in which Luke tells of the Forty Days as an introduction to the history of the rise and spread of the church. This is most fitting, for he regards what he is about to relate as really a continuation of what " Jesus began both to do and to teach " during His earthly ministry. Even while waiting for Pentecost the apostles look to Him for guidance (Acts 1: 24), and all their later acts are through His power and in witness of His resurrection (Acts 3: 12f.; 4: 33).

Matthew has from earliest times been credited to the apostle of that name; yet few scholars to-day accept his authorship. A strong argument against it is that the narrative portion of this gospel seems largely taken from Mark. Would an apostle reproduce the statements of a later Christian instead of giving his own reminiscences of the Master's life? Certainly if he did, his book would lose its apostolic authority. On the other hand, if the book was not by Matthew, why should it be assigned to him rather than to a more prominent apostle whose name would give it greater weight, *e. g.*, Peter or Andrew? The popular explanation is that there was a collection of Sayings of Jesus made by Matthew or, at least, bearing his name. It was the same collection that Luke used or one much like it. Sometime not long after 70 A. D., so the conjecture is, a person who owned a copy of this collection obtained a copy of Mark, and combined the two, adding also some of the many traditions about Jesus that were still cherished. The gospel thus resulting bore the name of Matthew because it was regarded as simply an enlargement of his Sayings. For convenience, we shall call the author of the whole book Matthew, without accepting or rejecting the explanation.

Matthew wrote primarily for Jewish Christians, many of whom were drawn back toward Judaism by the wave of patriotism arising with the revolt against Rome. He wanted them to realize that Jesus was the predicted Messiah and His kingdom the true Messianic kingdom, and that this kingdom had been taken away from the Jews because of their unbelief, and given to the true Israel,—the believers in all nations. His arrangement and emphasis of the incidents taken from Mark show this, and it is still more evident in incidents selected from the traditions. For example, the key-note of the birth story in Luke is "Unto you this day is born a Saviour," but in Matthew it is, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" The dream of Pilate's wife, the washing of Pilate's hands, the watch set at the tomb, make the guilt of the Jews more evident; and the rising and appearance of dead saints at and after the crucifixion, and the descent of a mighty angel to roll away the stone from the tomb, are intended to give added majesty to Christ's resurrection. All of these, found only in Matthew, have a strongly legendary character and are hard to accept literally. His account of the resurrection is very brief,—possibly because his book had now grown so large: and he does not set forth the proofs (the incredulity of the apostles and the manner in which this was removed), as his readers already accepted it as a fact. He is, however, concerned to disprove a story then in circulation by the Jews that the apostles had surreptitiously taken the body of Jesus out of the tomb. The wonder of the resurrection and the universality of Christ's kingdom and of His commission to His disciples are what he specially wishes to emphasize.

The Gospel of John,—was it written by the apostle John, or by one of his disciples or by another John or by whom? Most critics agree that its date is not later than 100 A. D., a time when the apostle might be living and active, if he was not more than twenty when he followed Jesus; but they are not at all agreed as to whether or not he was the author. Of course, authorship, though important, does not settle the question of authenticity. Some other writer may have given us a true picture of Jesus; or John, looking through the mist of years, may have failed to see Him as He really was. Without attempting to pronounce upon the authorship, we shall for convenience call the author John.

The main problem of the gospel arises from its striking difference from the first three,—the Synoptics. Not only are most of its incidents and many of its characters not found elsewhere, but the deity of Jesus which is veiled in the other gospels stands out here in clearest light. From the very beginning of His ministry He declares Himself to be the Son of God and is recognized as such by many. One may accept the Synoptics with some reservations without seeing in Jesus the Only Begotten of the Father; but no one can accept John and do this. The author declares that the purpose of his writing is "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (20: 33). Following this purpose did he create an ideal figure, or did he rather bring out the true figure more clearly? This is a most important question; but we need not discuss it there, since it bears but little on his narrative of the resurrection.

John's account of Easter Day shows clear marks of coming from one who had participated in its events and remembered even minute details. Also it seems to be an attempt to state more correctly or exactly what was already before the church in the accounts by the Synoptists. Matthew's general statement that Jesus appeared first to the women, John changes into a definite account of the appearance to Mary Magdalene. Luke's brief description of Peter's visit to the tomb he amplifies, and tells of the part "the other disciple whom Jesus loved" had in it. With his interest in the deeper things of Jesus' life and teachings, which earned for him his title "the theologian," he shows that the appearance Easter evening was not only to convince the disciples that the resurrection was a fact but mainly to give them the great commission and the Holy Spirit. The appearance to Thomas seems to have been told purely for the beatitude then given by Jesus, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed," which makes a most fitting conclusion to a book whose great purpose, as the next verse says, was "that ye may believe" (20: 26–31). Chapter 21, which is evidently a supplement and in some respects an anti-climax, was added to correct the current report that Jesus had said John would not die until He came again.

Of these four narratives of the resurrection, if John was the apostle, one was by an eye-witness, one by a companion of the apostle who took the most active part in the events, one by a physician who was by nature a careful historian, and one, if not by an apostle, was in some way identified with him. All were written when some of the original witnesses were still living and able to pass judgment upon their correctness. And while other narratives were early put into circulation (Luke

1: 1), these four were accepted by the church as the only ones for its use as authorities.

II. THE BODY IN WHICH JESUS APPEARED

BEFORE DISCUSSING other details of the gospel story, we might profitably consider the problem that presents more difficulties and creates most unbelief, viz., the nature of the body in which Jesus presented Himself to His followers after the resurrection.

" He is risen: he is not here," was the announcement of the angels on Easter morning. Whence had He risen, and where was He then? Our customary answer is, He had risen from the tomb, and was once more among His followers, invisible yet able at will to reveal His presence. But certainly the spirit of Jesus had not remained with His body after death. His promise to the robber on the cross was, " To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise " (Luke 23: 43). And the uniform statement in the New Testament is that He rose, not from the grave but " from the dead,"—*i. e.*, from the company of the spirits of the departed whose realm the Jews called Sheol or, in Greek, Hades,—one region of it being sometimes named Paradise. It is foolish, of course, to conjecture where Hades may be, for space and locality are not to be assigned to spiritual realities: but the Jews thought of the region of the dead as under the earth; and we keep that thought in the article of the Apostles' Creed, "He descended into Hades." What we chiefly mean to-day, however, by this article is that Jesus tasted fully the human experience of death, not only in the separation of the soul from the body but in whatever follows after that (Heb. 2: 9).

How, then, about the body in the tomb? Before we seek an answer, let us consider what Paul in I Cor. 15 and elsewhere teaches about the resurrection body of those "that are fallen asleep in Christ." His answer to the question "With what body do they come" should help us: for Christ is "the first fruits" of the resurrection, and those who are to be with Him shall be like Him. Note that he is writing about only the Christian dead. He recognizes that for them there are two bodies, one earthly, the other heavenly, each suited to the realm in which the spirit that inhabits it dwells. The earthly is transient, "a tent"; the heavenly is eternal, "a building from God" (II Cor. 5: 1). There may be a connection between the two: but the heavenly does not proceed from the earthly by any process of development or transformation: "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Paul's figure of the buried seed must not be pressed to prove the contrary. By it he seeks to show simply that the body that now is, is not the body that shall be: "God giveth it a body even as it pleased him." What the earthly body is, we know: what the heavenly body, given at the resurrection will be, we can only imagine, using the contrasts between corruption and incorruption, dishonour and glory, weakness and power, psychical and spiritual, that Paul himself supplies (I Cor. 15: 42f.). The resurrection is a result of the Christian's union with Christ (I Cor. 15: 22), and the heavenly body is given then. When that takes place, and whether there is an intermediate state in which the soul is bodiless or, as St. Paul phrases it, "found naked" (II Cor. 5:3), I shall not attempt to discuss. The one thing I wish to emphasize is that, whatever meaning to-day may be given to the creedal phrase "the resurrection of the body," we cannot understand by it the resurrection of the flesh, though once it did bear that precise meaning.

The resurrection of Christ was on the third day after His death, and was a resurrection from the dead. Was it a return to earth for forty days and then an ascension to heaven? There is nothing in the record to indicate this, though it is convenient to group all the experiences of those days under the one term, the resurrection. The disciples rejoice when Jesus appears among them, but they never ask "Where abidest thou?" As Dr. Gore points out, He "is not represented as living here or there,—in Jerusalem or Galilee, at this house or that, or moving hither and thither on foot; He is translated apparently into a higher sphere of being, out of which He manifests Himself in one form or another as suits His purpose." In His conversation with the two of Emmaus, Jesus speaks as if already He had risen to heaven, " Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?" And His announcement on the mountain, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth," would indicate that He had taken His seat on the right hand of God. John, explaining a statement by Jesus at Tabernacles, says, "This spake he of the Spirit which they that believed in him were to receive; for the spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7: 39): yet on Easter evening Jesus did give the Spirit to His disciples. Also, throughout the discourse after the Last Supper, Jesus speaks as if His return to the Father and the consequent glorification were to take place immediately after His death (John 14: 28; 17: 5, et al.). All this, it seems to me, justifies the conclusion that Christ rose from the dead, not to earth but to heaven; and His appearances to the disciples as well as to Paul, no matter in what form, were from heaven.

If the gospel account is trustworthy, as I have tried to show, the body in which Jesus appeared on Easter was not the glorified resurrection one. Some writers hold that it was in the process of being glorified, a process completed at the ascension: and in proof of this they say that the later appearances are more spiritual than the earlier ones. I fail to discover this in the accounts: the body is represented as a material one from first to last, though that fact is emphasized only at the outset. Was it, then, the body from the tomb, revived, healed, clothed, and with new properties, or was it a body that the Lord from heaven assumed for each occasion? Something can be said for either view. The tomb was empty: it had to be if the disciples were to think that Jesus had conquered death; but this does not prove that the body had come forth, to remain for Jesus' use until the ascension when it would return to the elements out of which it was framed. It may have been prevented from seeing corruption (Acts 2: 31) by dissolution at the hour when He assumed His resurrection body or even before then. The body in which He appeared was, though with marked differences, greatly like His former body: it had to be if the disciples were to be convinced that He really was with them again; but this does not prove that it was the same body. It may have been instantaneously created and dissolved on each separate occasion. Frankly, we are dealing with a subject beyond our powers of knowledge. Nor is it a matter of importance save to those who, disregarding Paul's teaching about the resurrection body, maintain that the appearances of Jesus reveal to us what our heavenly body shall be like. All we are concerned to know is whether the apostles were true or false witnesses when they testified as to "that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life" (I John 1: 1).

God!

III. CONCERNING DISCREPANCIES AND OMISSIONS

WHEN WE compare the four gospels in their story of the resurrection we cannot fail to notice discrepancies between the narratives, and omissions from each of important incidents told in some other. These are pronounced by some critics as "no greater than the ordinary variations of independent narratives," and not invalidating the main facts of the resurrection; while other critics agree that "no careful historian would feel justified in drawing from these confused, contradictory and mutually exclusive stories the inference that a tomb, closed with a heavy stone, into which Jesus had been laid was by some women found to be empty on the third day," and they proceed to reconstruct the story regardless of the gospel statements or to reject it totally. If we do not accept the former opinion, are we obliged to accept the latter, or is there some middle ground between the two?

Concerning the omissions, they need not disturb us; silence does not necessarily mean ignorance. None of the evangelists—Luke comes nearest it—attempted to write a Life of Jesus or even to record all that he knew about Him: he gave only such incidents as seemed to contain a special lesson for His followers, and such sayings as were most precious and life-giving. The writer of John states this clearly (John 20: 30–31), and doubtless the others when they finished their gospels were ready to make the same statement. It has been truly said, "No one of the evangelists professes to give a complete account of everything that happened on that wonderful Easter morning and day. Each selects and combines from his own point of view: gives outstanding names and facts without disputing or denying that others may have something else to tell: in default of more exact knowledge, sometimes generalizes."

Naturally the discrepancies are found almost wholly in the story of Easter morning, since it alone is told by all four evangelists; indeed, no other resurrection incident except that on Easter evening is told by more than one. But do discrepancies force us to reject it? If so, how about the crucifixion which likewise is told by all four evangelists? If one were disposed to doubt that Jesus was crucified, he could point out how the three accounts (disregarding Matthew which reproduces Mark almost exactly) are full of discrepancies: *e. g.*, Jesus Himself bore the cross (John), Simon was compelled to bear it (Mark and Luke): both the robbers reviled Him (Mark), one did and was rebuked by the other (Luke); the soldiers cast lots for all His garments (Mark), only for the seamless tunic (John): all give a brief superscription on the cross, but no two agree as to its words. Also, the nature and incidents of the scene are not the same in any two of the three gospels. In Mark, Jesus refuses a stupefying draught offered before crucifixion, utters the despairing "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," and dies with a loud cry: it is a scene of horror unrelieved. In Luke He bids the women not to weep for Him, prays for His crucifiers, promises Paradise to the penitent thief, and dies saying " Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit ": His soul remains untroubled and His love is manifested throughout the whole. In John He commits His mother to the apostle's care, says " I thirst " and drinks the sour wine held to His lips, and with the words " It is finished " bows His head and dies: there is nothing about taunts of foes or hours of darkness; we see only quiet endurance of appointed suffering.

Discrepancies and omissions do not cause us to reject the story of the crucifixion: why then should they be emphasized as proofs that the story of the resurrection is untrue? Mainly from aversion to the supernatural. That Jesus should die is wholly credible, and any uncertainty about the details of His death does not make it less so; but that He should rise from the dead is a miracle, and modern thought is stoutly set to disprove all miracles. Of course, the real question is, Who was Jesus of Nazareth? If He Himself belonged to the realm of the supernatural, His resurrection ceases to be incredible, and discrepancies in the accounts of it are of minor importance.

The evangelists told the story of the resurrection, each in his own way. Discrepancies they did not seek to shun because they did not dream that their accounts would be challenged item by item, and disputed at every point. The remarkable thing is that the main facts stand out so clearly, and the four accounts can be woven into an harmonious whole. We have already tried to show this: let us now look more minutely at each of the details.

1. *The Visit of the Women.* The story of the Forty Days begins with the visit of the women to the empty tomb. For the resurrection itself there is no reliable record. Imagination, as we have said, would be inclined to picture it as witnessed by someone: and we are not surprised to find in the apocryphal Gospel of Peter that the guard and the elders do see Jesus come forth from the tomb in supernatural form, but the details given are so mystical and absurd that there can be no historical tradition behind them. Concerning Matthew's story of the guard it is held by many to be equally unhistorical,—a later invention set forth, first as a possibility and eventually as a fact, in answer to the charge of the Jews that the tomb was empty because the disciples came by night and carried off the body of Jesus. As its truth or falsity has little bearing upon the facts of the resurrection, we need not pause to discuss it.

Probably the different women who came to the tomb on Easter morning had different experiences: even if they had the same, their stories would differ. It was an hour of excitement in which surprise, fear, consternation, ecstasy were rapidly experienced, and any exact observation or calm report of what they saw and heard is not to be expected. Moreover, that which they told seemed to the apostles a crazy tale of excited women, and did not sink into their minds. It was speedily almost forgotten, pushed out by their own experiences. In later days it was deemed so unimportant, compared with what the apostles themselves had testified, that it was seldom repeated in detail. It might serve as a preface, explaining how the tomb was discovered to be empty and the news brought to the apostles; and then attention would be centered on what the apostles themselves had experienced.

Disagreements are exactly what we have reason to expect; but we find upon examination that they are mainly upon unessential matters; in the great essentials, the main facts, there is harmony. Let us note these:

(a) Certain women of the company that followed Jesus came to the tomb. All four gospels name Mary of Magdala: all the synoptists add Mary the mother of James; Mark adds Salome; and Luke adds Joanna and others unnamed. John implies others in his words "We know not." Whether these came together or in separate parties we are not told.

(b) They came on Easter morning at or about daybreak. Matthew's note of time, "Late on the Sabbath day as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week" is puzzling. Taken alone it would seem to mean that they went on Saturday shortly before sunset, when the Sabbath would end and the first day of the week begin ("dawn"): but that which Matthew proceeds to tell about what the women experienced evidently took place Sunday morning, and we cannot suppose they remained at the tomb through the night. Possibly he thinks of two visits, one on Saturday "to see the sepulcher," and one on Sunday morning, and (as in 21: 19–20) omits the interval of time between them; or it may be that he has mixed up the two notes of time given in Mark 16: 1–2, through omitting any mention of buying the spices; or possibly Meyer is right in holding that "late on the Sabbath" is a term that could be used for the night hours following the regular close of the Sabbath. Whatever explanation we adopt, we cannot place Matthew 28: 5–8 anywhere except on Easter morning. Mark's two notes of the time, "very early" and "when the sun had risen" would surely be noted by critics as discrepancies if they were given in different narratives. That the women came bearing spices and ointments does not conflict with the statement by John that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had already embalmed the body for burial. There would be the feeling that in their haste the men might have omitted some loving attention which could yet be supplied. Evidently neither Joseph nor the women had any expectation of a resurrection.

(c) They found the stone removed and the tomb empty. It is a truthful touch that the women, overwhelmed with sorrow and concern about anointing the body, did not realize the difficulty of removing the stone until they neared the tomb. Matthew tells that an angel had rolled it away;

and the other evangelists imply a supernatural agency. Mark and Luke say they entered the tomb, as they naturally would do. Matthew by inserting the story of the guard, creates the supposition that the angel addressed the women from without, seated upon the stone he had rolled away, but his invitation, " Come, see the place where the Lord lay " seems to have been when they were within. John is silent about the women, other than Mary.

(d) They have an angelic vision and announcement that the Lord has risen. I shall not attempt to prove or disprove the existence of angels. Because our ancestors fancied they knew everything about them, we are prone to declare that nothing can be known. Certainly, if such beings exist unseen, it is not incredible that for due cause they should reveal their presence. In this instance there was need that the women be told the meaning of the empty tomb; otherwise for them it would have no resurrection message. Luke says two angels (24: 4, 23), Matthew one, and Mark " a young man, arrayed in a white robe," evidently meaning an angel. They differ as to when the angels were seen,—upon entering the tomb or later, and as to their position. We must recognize that since the visions were purely spiritual, they may not have been the same to each spectator; and, also, that the fear they created would make exact observation difficult. In John there is no angelic announcement of the resurrection because in Mary's first visit to the tomb she seems to have hurried away before the angels were seen, and in the second Jesus appears to her directly after she sees and speaks with two angels. Without the announcement by the angels the other women would have returned in the same state of mind as Mary after her first visit.

(e) They receive a rebuke and a message. There is no reason to think that any evangelist gives the exact words or all that the angels spoke. John gives nothing, because he confines his account to Mary Magdalene who left the tomb before the angels appeared. Luke's difference from Mark is emphasized by sceptics as a discrepancy; but is it? What he reports is not a message to the apostles but a rebuke to the women for seeking the living among the dead: "Remember how he spoke unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must . . . be crucified and on the third day rise again." Mark does give a message to the apostles, "He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him." Evidently this is not a command, though it is often treated as such: it is a promise given at the Last Supper (Mark 14: 28) and meaning, so the context shows, that Jesus will go, not before they do, but in front of them as a shepherd goes before his sheep. Matthew differs from Mark in only some minor points and the omission of "and Peter." Probably in the lost conclusion of Mark there was an account of the appearance to Peter, which Matthew did not have space to reproduce, and therefore he omitted the two words that point forward to it.

(f) The women hasten from the tomb with mingled emotions, and tell their experiences to the disciples. Mark's gospel does not go on to this conclusion, but breaks off with "They said nothing to anyone for they were afraid." That this could not have been its ending seems evident. There had been an express angelic command to tell the disciples: how could they disobey it? Moreover, is it probable that when they met the other disciples they would say nothing about a matter so deeply interesting and important? There was nothing to fear in telling them; and human nature must have been different then from now if they kept silent. Luke carries the story forward and tells of the incredulity with which the apostles received the women's report, treating it as "idle talk,"—the babbling of one in a delirium.

Matthew omits any report to the disciples, but tells that Jesus met the women on their way, and gave them a message almost identical with that which they already were carrying, though He changes it into a command to depart into Galilee. The incident is introduced differently in different manuscripts (compare A. V. with R. V.) and interrupts the narrative in a way that leads us to think it an interpolation by some later scribe. The lack of a sufficient reason for this appearance, the strange salutation, "All hail," the difficulty of explaining why a direct command to go to Galilee should be disregarded, are arguments against its authenticity: and its evident resemblance to John's account of the appearance to Mary, especially in the repetition of the unique phrase "My brethren," is reason for thinking it a generalized account of the latter appearance.

2. *The Visit of Peter and John.* Here we have one of several instances where John corrects or amplifies the account given by the earlier evangelists. In Luke we have only Peter at the tomb, and he satisfies himself that the tomb is empty by looking into it. John's detailed and graphic account of the acts of the two visitors and the condition of the grave-clothes, bears the marks of a participant. It is Mary's report and not the women's (as in Luke) that rouses them to hasten to the tomb. That she did not find them together may be indicated by the repetition of "to" in the statement "she cometh to Simon Peter and to the other disciple." This other disciple "whom Jesus loved," is never named, but the evidence is strong that he was the apostle John. If so, he probably was a nephew of the Virgin Mary, and by far the youngest of the Twelve: both facts would explain why the heart of Jesus went out in special measure to him. The present incident reveals his youthfulness in his outrunning Peter, his hesitancy to enter the tomb, and his quickness to believe that something supernatural had taken place. The closing statement "For as yet they knew not the scripture that he must rise again from the dead" is not an explanation of what precedes it, but rather a reminder to the readers of the ignorance of the two apostles.

3. The Appearance to Mary. The two angels whom Mary saw were sitting, "one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." We may think of the tomb as a chamber cut in the soft limestone rock, and with recesses opposite the low entrance and on either side as resting-places for the dead. On one of these shelves the body of Jesus had been laid: His grave-clothes were still there, but the wrapping for His head had fallen out upon the floor, still retaining its rolled shape. Mary, when stooping down and looking in, as did Peter, could see the niche and, sitting by it at either end, an angel. Some critics find in Luke's description of the tomb a discrepancy with Mark. "Hewn in stone" (Luke 23: 53), they say, means built out of hewn stone. If they are correct, which I doubt, Luke has simply done here what he did in 5: 19 (cf. Mark 2: 4)—altered Mark's statement, "hewn out of a rock" (Mark 15: 46) to make it intelligible to his readers. Theophilus and the others for whom Luke wrote knew little about tombs dug in cliffs, but were familiar with those built of stone.

The words of Jesus to Mary, "I have not yet ascended unto the Father," seem to indicate that He was still abiding on earth, and would not join His Father until the end of the Forty Days: but, as we have already pointed out, His resurrection on the third day was a rising from the dead, not to earth but to heaven, and had already taken place. The seeming contradiction grows out of the almost unavoidable introduction of space and time into our thought of spiritual things. John 3: 13 is an illustration of this: the last clause of that verse is omitted in some manuscripts because it seems impossible that Jesus on earth should declare that the Son of Man is in heaven. But when we put aside space and time we can understand, though we cannot picture it, that the Only Begotten Son is ever in the bosom of the Father (John 1: 18). To the apostles, as to us, the resurrection and the ascension are distinct events separated by time: but this is due to the limitations of human thought.

4. The Appearance to Peter. The appearance to Peter would be emphasized by the early Christians both because it was the first to create belief in the resurrection, and because he was the recognized leader of the apostolic band; but we have no details of it. Of course, the lost conclusion of Mark may have contained some; indeed, its clause "and Peter" in the message of the angels makes us expect an account of this appearance. But if Luke had found in Mark or any other source anything about it worth recording, we may be sure he would have given it; the interest was so great. We must, therefore, conclude that Peter treated what passed between himself and his Lord as strictly personal and private. Legends about the interview would speedily be created: but none were admitted to the gospels because none were trustworthy. This silence of the evangelists increases our confidence that the rest of their story is only what they accepted as fully verified. Peter became the foremost of the witnesses to the resurrection (Acts 2: 32; 3: 15; 5: 32; 10: 41): and what seems to have been a creed of the very early church recites the appearance to him and to the Twelve (I Cor. 15: 3–5).

5. *The Walk to Emmaus.* This is not only the most graphic account of any incident given in Luke's gospel, but also the fullest. Because it bears the marks of an eye-witness some have supposed that Luke himself was the unnamed companion of Cleopas: and because we know Luke was a Gentile, they have added the supposition that he was one of the group who came in the Passion week with the request, "We would see Jesus." If this were so, we would have in this gospel, as in the other three, something of the author's own experience. But conclusively against it is Luke's habit, revealed in Acts, of using "we" whenever he narrates an event in which he had a part: also, and still more strongly, the way in which at the opening of his gospel he expressly places himself among those who were not eye-witnesses but had received their information from those who were. Why then did he give such a full and graphic account? Probably because he had gained it from Cleopas himself, who would treasure it and repeat every detail, relating them with dramatic force. This would explain, too, why the companion was left unnamed: he was no one whom Luke knew, or Cleopas did not name him.

Apparently the two were absorbed in discussing the probability of the resurrection,—one inclined to believe, the other raising objections. There is a quiet humour in Jesus' opening question, " What are these words you are throwing at each other? " And in their statements to Him we can almost reconstruct their previous dialogue: " We hoped it was He who should redeem Israel."—" But He has been dead three days."—" The women say that angels told them He is alive."—" But the men who went to the tomb did not see Him."

Sceptics often speak as if Jesus appeared in different forms, thus rendering recognition difficult. But this is the sole instance: and even here it is only the late addition to Mark that says " He was manifested in another form." We have already discussed why the two travellers did not recognize Him. Mary mistook Him for the gardener because she hardly looked at Him: she turned enough to see that a man was standing behind her, and then turned back to her view of the angels in the tomb. The group on Easter evening were frightened into thinking Him a ghost by His sudden appearance. The fishermen on the Lake were looking at Him from a distance in the early morning mists. And of the five hundred on the mountain some were not well enough acquainted with Him to recognize Him immediately as He came toward them.

6. *The Appearance Easter Evening.* The two accounts of this appearance are complementary but

not discrepant. Luke's narrative is dramatic, and centers on the proofs that Jesus appeared in the flesh. He brings out clearly the fright and incredulity of the little company and, as in other instances, he apologizes for the apostles,—" they disbelieved for joy," it was too good to be true!

In John's account the only fear mentioned is of the Jewish enemies, and there is no emphasis of unbelief. Jesus makes a formal transfer of His own mission, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Whether this was to the apostles only or to all the disciples assembled in the room is much disputed because two very different theories of church government are involved in the decision. Then by a symbolic act He equips them with the spiritual wisdom and authority with which He Himself had performed the mission of the Father. This was a necessary preparation even for receiving the lessons He was now to teach them. Later on at Pentecost they were to receive another baptism of the Holy Ghost giving them power for witness-bearing (Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 8). The discourse in Luke 24: 44–49 I take to be a summary of the teachings of Jesus during the whole resurrection period. It begins with what resembles the instruction on the way to Emmaus, and closes with a command given just before the ascension to remain in Jerusalem until the Pentecostal baptism.

Many critics maintain that Luke in his gospel places the ascension at the close of this meeting; and on its face the narrative certainly seems to support them, though it does not fix the time by saying "that very day" as it does for the walk to Emmaus. But in Acts Luke states plainly that the period between the resurrection and the ascension was forty days. Some suggest that before writing this second book he had gained fuller information. Yet he was a companion of Paul before he wrote the first, and it is incredible that he knew nothing of the appearances Paul mentions, or supposed they all took place on Easter Day. The simplest explanation of the seeming discrepancy between his two narratives is that when he had finished with the Easter appearances, he realized that he should end his gospel because a papyrus roll must not be so large that it cannot be held with one hand while it is unrolled with the other for reading. Both his gospel and Acts seem to reach that limit. But he liked to complete a narrative, even if he was forced to omit all details. His ending of Acts shows this. So he added a summary of Jesus' teachings during the Forty Days, and a very brief account of the ascension and the days immediately following it, reserving a fuller account for the opening of his second book. Such condensation is what creates the impression that Jesus gave a protracted discourse to His disciples on Easter evening and then late at night led them out for a long walk in the darkness to the place of His ascension. Concerning this Swete remarks that those who accept it are "lacking in a sense of humour." Certainly we must agree with Plummer and others who pronounce it incredible.

7. *The Appearance to Thomas.* John for some reason shows a special interest in Thomas; except for the Fourth Gospel we would know only his name. Indeed, we haven't his actual name; for Thomas is the Hebrew word for twin, and Didymus is merely the Greek equivalent, which may have been used in Gentile circles. Why this unnamed apostle should be called " the Twin " is an enigma. Early tradition says his name was Judas: and as there were two others of that same name among the Twelve, we can understand why a nickname might become current for the third. But why " the Twin " ? Was it from relationship or close companionship with John or some other apostle?

Though John was the disciple whom Jesus specially loved, Thomas seems to have been the disciple who specially loved Jesus. Had the others been by nature as subject to doubts and fear, we question whether their love would have kept them as loyal. He was sure that the visit to Bethany involved His Master's death: but when he found that Jesus was determined to make it, he did not hesitate to accompany Him ready, if need be, to die with Him (John 11: 16). He could not imagine what journey Jesus had in mind when He said " I go to prepare a place for you," but he wanted to know the way that he might not be left behind (John 14: 5). So, too, he refused to believe the report of the resurrection, because it was such good news that he was sure it could not be true,—the rejoicing disciples must be deceived: but when he did meet the risen Christ, his confession of belief was instant, and more complete than that of any of the others. It is " the loftiest view of the Lord given in the gospels." We wish we knew something about his later life, and could accept the tradition that he went to India and was the evangelist of the Malabar coast.

Jesus' appearance on this second Sabbath was doubtless not unexpected, though the use of " cometh " instead of " came " (v. 19) can hardly be held to indicate this. The disciples were gathered for it, having persuaded Thomas to join them though he still thought them mistaken; and the doors were shut but not this time " for fear of the Jews." The exhortation to Thomas (or was it a rebuke?) should be translated " Become not faithless " : Thomas had not yet lost faith completely, but was near doing so. And the effect of the revelation of His knowledge of Thomas' inner life is similar to the same in the case of Nathanael (John 1: 48f.). We note that Jesus offers no new proof that it is really He in the flesh; though if the story were invented to strengthen faith in the resurrection, it would fail in its purpose unless it made the grounds for belief something additional to what had already been stated.

Though it is probable that on this occasion as on others Jesus held a prolonged conversation with His disciples, John records nothing of it. He tells the story mainly for the sake of the beatitude it contains, which is a suitable and inspiring close to his gospel. The meaning of this beatitude is well expressed in I Peter 1: 8, " Whom not having seen ye love: on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

8. *The Appearance by the Lake.* John's gospel ended with the twentieth chapter, and then the story of this appearance was added as a supplement. The statement, "This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to his disciples" comes in awkwardly, and seems like a marginal note by some copyist. Evidently it recognizes only the appearances on Easter evening and a week later, recorded in the previous chapter. Possibly those two were considered appearances meant for all the disciples in distinction from those with individual meaning. That John knew of no other appearances except that to Mary Magdalene is improbable in light of his statement of how much he knew but did not feel it necessary to record (20: 30f.).

The evident resemblances here to Luke's account of the original call of Peter (Luke 5: 4–11) have always been noticed: and those who deny the resurrection maintain that the two stories are different versions of one incident which Luke rightly puts at the opening of the public ministry. But if we must treat the two as identical, the argument is strongly in favour of accepting John's account. However, the resemblances are no compelling reason for concluding that there was but one amazing draught of fishes: and John's statement, "that night they caught nothing" seems to point back to another night when they had the same experience, most unusual on this lake so full of fish. The similarity of the second to the first would awaken vivid memories of the day when Jesus originally called them to follow Him, and would thus prepare them for another call. At the same time there are interesting differences, full of symbolic significance.

John's story, unlike that of Luke, abounds in minute details so unimportant that only a participant and himself a fisherman would remember and record them, *e g.* the colloquial, " Boys, you haven't any fish, have you? ", the attire of Peter, the distance from shore, the landing in a dingey dragging after it the net which could not be lifted into the boat because it was too heavy with the catch, the number and great size of the fish.

" Lovest thou me more than these? " may mean " more than you love these things before us,"—the boat, the net, the fish and lake,—in which Peter's life had once been enwrapped. Or it may mean " more than these other disciples love me," which would indicate that Peter had prided himself on his superior devotion to the Master (Mark 14: 29). In either case his reply abandons all attempt at comparison, and leaves the measure of his love to be determined by the Lord's knowledge of him. Much significance is often discovered in the alternate use of two Greek words for love in the thrice repeated question by Jesus and answer by Peter: but the latest commentator, and also the early Greek commentators, find no essential difference between them as they are used here. The question with a solemn pause for meditation between each repetition of it was a penetrating demand for a deeper, steadier love than what the impulsive, fickle Peter had hitherto given; for upon its answer depended the stewardship which Jesus wished to confer upon him. He had once been called to be fisher of men; now, if his love was equal to the task, he was to be shepherd of Christ's flock.

Except for John's statement that Jesus' words in 21: 18 are a prediction of the manner of Peter's death, we would see in them nothing more than a contrast between his independent strength in youth, and his helpless dependence in old age. Tradition tells us that his death was by crucifixion: so " thou shalt stretch forth thy hands " has often been understood to mean stretch them forth for nailing to the cross; but it is better, perhaps, to find in the whole statement simply a prediction that Peter is to die a martyr's death. The vagueness of the prophecy is a proof of its authenticity; a fabrication or later alteration would make it more explicit.

Peter's question about John's future, "And this man, what? " seems to have been prompted not by mere curiosity nor by loving interest, so much as by desire to learn whether his own fate was to be more severe than that of the beloved disciple. There was a certain amount of jealousy in it, which called forth the rebuke of Jesus, " If I will that he tarry while I am coming, what is that to thee? follow thou me." It would seem that Jesus, after

His words with Peter, had started to walk away, and the apostle in literal obedience of the command, " Follow me," was withdrawing after Him, when John's action in following them caused Peter's question. Neither here nor in the other recorded Galilean appearance does Jesus manifest Himself or disappear suddenly. Was this to help the disciples in their thought of Him by blending the natural with the supernatural?

9. *The Appearance on the Mountain.* Matthew's narrative of this appearance has been pronounced to be " of the nature of an abrupt summary " caused, perhaps, by the fact that his roll of papyrus was growing too large for convenient use. There is good reason to think that Mark in his conclusion, now lost, told the story: and Matthew could not omit it because he had recorded the angel's promise of it (28: 7), and because it is so directly in line with the purpose of his whole gospel. While he mentions only the Eleven as present when Jesus appeared, we may well include the " above five hundred brethren " of Paul's list. It is impossible that among the Eleven " some doubted " when they saw Jesus. They had come to a place appointed by Jesus Himself (which indicates an earlier appearance to them), and they had also the promise of the angel that they should see Him. But among the five hundred may have been some who were sceptical when they saw Jesus in the distance, but would join in worship when He came to them.

" Jesus talked to them " is a closer translation of the Greek than " Jesus spake to them." What He said was in the form of a familiar address or even of a conversation, though there is given only a few of its most important sentences. The mission assigned to the apostles is to " make disciples of all the nations," which is a far broader task than to win individuals for Christ among all nations: it is the conversion of the whole nation, filling its life with the life of Christ, which is the modern aim of missions. The universality of this command, which is reproduced in the later " Ye shall be my witnesses . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth " (Acts 1: 8) must have staggered the apostles; and the early history of the church shows how reluctantly they undertook a world mission. Certainly such words could not have been invented and ascribed to Christ when the church was still clinging to the cradle in which it was born.

10. The Appearance to James. There is hopeless dispute over the relationship of Jesus to " His brethren." Were they children of Joseph and Mary after the birth of Jesus, or children of Joseph by a former wife, or children of a brother or a sister of either Mary or Joseph? The data for a decision are so few, and scholars are so much influenced by their widely differing opinions of the holiness of a celibate life, that no answer acceptable to all can be reached. If James grew up in the home at Nazareth, what we learn about him in Acts, and what we may gather from the Epistle of James (if he wrote it) become interesting sidelights upon the religious life of that household. It would seem to have been austere and shaped strictly by the Mosaic law. The brothers reared in such a conservative home would be little disposed to sympathize with Jesus, far less to accept Him as the Messiah.

In the apocryphal Gospel according to the Hebrews early writers say there was the following passage about the appearance to James: "The Lord, after handing over the linen cloth to the servant of the high-priest, went to James and appeared to him; for James had sworn he would eat no bread from the hour at which he had drunk the cup of the Lord till he should see Him rising again from those who are asleep. . . . Bring ye, the Lord says, a table and bread. . . . He took bread and blessed and brake it, and gave it to James the Just, and said to him, 'My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from those who are asleep.'" If this were of any historical value, it would place the appearance to James among the very first: but Paul's list, which is probably in chronological order, places it after that to the five hundred. We can, therefore, suppose it was in Galilee; and that it produced in James and his brothers the full belief which led to their sharing the disciples' life in Jerusalem (Acts 1: 14).

11. *The Appearance at Ascension.* The ascen-

sion, unlike the resurrection, did not seem a decisive event in the work of Christ: so none of the evangelists except Luke relates it. He thought it a fitting close to his gospel, and also a suitable introduction to his history of the church. Some find in his words, "all that Jesus began both to do and to teach" (Acts 1: 1), a hint that he considered his second book to be a narrative of the further acts and teachings by the Lord, now working through His disciples.

His second account of the ascension is much fuller than the first, and does not appear to agree precisely with it. We have already discussed the problem of date,—whether Easter Sunday or forty days later. The other disagreements can easily be reconciled. The gospel makes the place Mt. Olivet, while Acts puts it over against Bethany; but Bethany was on a slope of Mt. Olivet. The farewell words seem in the gospel to have been spoken before Jesus led the disciples forth from Jerusalem; in Acts they are at the place of ascension: but we have seen reason to believe that the discourse given in the gospel is a summary of all His post-resurrection teachings, rather than simply His farewell address.

The explanation that the distance travelled was a Sabbath day's journey may indicate that the ascension was on a Sabbath. Theophilus, a Gentile convert, would not know the exact location of Mt. Olivet, nor the length of a Sabbath day's journey; but probably would know that Jews refuse to travel on the Sabbath, and the explanation would show that in this instance the Sabbath law was not broken. If the day was the Sabbath, we must reckon the Forty Days as a round number.

The question " Dost thou at this time restore the kingdom of Israel? " was asked when they were assembled for the ascension. They felt that they had been brought forth for something very important, and naturally thought it was what they eagerly expected. Even at the last Jesus had to disappoint their patriotic hopes, and renew His instructions about the character and scope of their future work.

Much merriment has been made by scoffers over the idea that Jesus reached heaven by going up from earth, an idea that harmonizes neither with astronomy nor with philosophy. Most of us to-day know that the world is round and revolves in twenty-four hours; and a few of us have struggled to grasp the idea of time and space set forth by Kant or Einstein. But the apostles were not thus privileged; and if Jesus had first to teach them these truths, the great lessons He wished to impart would have waited indefinitely. In their thought heaven was above them and was a place; and to ascend into the skies was the simplest way to impress upon them that He had passed into the home of the blessed. Also, the cloud that received Him out of their sight was to them the assurance that He was with His Father; for in the Jewish Scriptures a cloud was the indication of Jehovah's presence.

12. The Appearance to Paul. We need not attempt to reconcile the discrepancies as to what he and the others experienced at the time of his vision (Acts 9: 3f.; 22: 6f.; 26: 12f.). Luke let them stand, evidently regarding them as unimportant or else, with his fuller knowledge of the details, not really discrepant. As to when Paul first received his commission to the Gentiles, we may follow Luke who makes it come through Ananias. Paul in his speech to the angry mob in the temple court omits this, and tells only of the commission received three years later when he was praying in the temple. Evidently he hoped they would be more willing to listen to what had been given him in their house of God. When addressing Felix and Agrippa, he joined all his later experience to his account of the heavenly vision, and thus placed the commission in the lips of Jesus from whom, however received, it really came.

The resurrection is given a firm historical foundation in I Cor. 15. There is practically no doubt that Paul wrote the epistle, and not more than twenty-five years after the crucifixion. His character is such that we cannot question his veracity. He had abundant opportunity to know about the appearances: one was to himself and the others to intimate associates. He had every inducement to ascertain the full truth; if he was deceived, he was "of all men most pitiable." And he was forced to be exact in his statements; there were plenty of friends and enemies able and ready to point out any inaccuracy.

It has been argued that his omission of details shows ignorance of them except, of course, those of the appearance to himself. But why should he give details? He was not writing a history of the resurrection, nor even trying to prove the fact of it. He had been pastor of the church in Corinth once for nearly or quite two years: and there, as wherever he preached, had made the resurrection the central point of his gospel. Their doubts had already been dispelled, and their curiosity satisfied. Like all Christians of the first century, they believed that Christ had risen; and in his letter he is simply reminding them of the strong evidence upon which their belief rests, before he goes on to discuss the difficulties disturbing their hope of their own resurrection.

Was the appearance to Paul of the same character as those to the other witnesses he names? Many hold that it must have been,—or at least, that he supposed it was—because he does not state any difference. "He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve . . . and last of all he appeared to me also." But why should he distinguish between them? The fact of Christ's resurrection, not the form of it, is what he would set forth as the preface to his discussion of the resurrection of Christians; and that fact was established by the witnesses he cites. "He has been raised" is proved by "He appeared," no matter whether the appearance was physical or spiritual. That he was ignorant of the manner in which Jesus presented Himself to Peter and James and the others seems incredible when he knew them so well. In his visit to Peter, he must have told the story of his own conversion, and this would naturally lead Peter to tell how Jesus had appeared to him. Luke, who most strongly of all the evangelists emphasizes the physical details of the appearances on Easter, must have learned from Paul much of what he wrote, or had it confirmed by him.

Also, it is argued that because Paul in I Corinthians 15 and elsewhere teaches that the resurrection of Christians is like that of their Master and that they rise in a glorified body, he must have held that Jesus was glorified at once when He rose, and therefore could not appear in any other than a glorified form. But why the impossibility? Is Christ in heaven restricted as He was on earth? Even during His public ministry, in order to strengthen their faith, He gave to three of His disciples a revelation of Himself in His glorified body (Luke 9: 28f.): why must Paul hold that later on He could not do exactly the reverse, if there was a similar need?

III

SUBSTITUTES FOR THE GOSPEL STORY

I. PROBLEMS THAT DEMAND SOLVING

SOME LIVES of Christ, usually those that depict Him as only a most remarkable religious genius, end with His death and burial, adding perhaps an appreciative tribute to the influence of His teachings. They do not attempt to answer the question which any thoughtful reader cannot but ask, How was it that the teachings did not perish with the Teacher? Confucius and Gautama still sway millions by their words; but they taught for years with increasing fame and large and ever larger groups of disciples who cherished their words and rejoiced to pass them on. Jesus had not as many months of public work as these had years; and after an initial success His popularity waned until only a handful of disciples, obscure and illiterate, were left to mourn His death. Confucius and Gautama taught in the two most populous lands on earth, and their teachings were specially suited to the genius of their countrymen. The land of Jesus was petty in size and population, and what He taught was a stumbling-block to His people, and has been ever since. We may well pronounce it a miracle that His life and words were not wholly forgotten a few years after He died: and it is not honest to ignore the problem of what wrought that miracle.

Certain other Lives of Christ that reject the gospel story of the resurrection because they give no place to the miraculous, do make an honest attempt to explain how the apostolic church gained its firm belief that Jesus, after dying on the cross, appeared in the flesh to His sorrowing disciples. They recognize that without this belief there could have been no church and little or no remembrance of its Founder: also, that the gospels did not create it but vice versa; so that pronouncing Mark and the others untrustworthy does not dispose of the problem. Accordingly they set forth certain theories as to what did actually take place after the crucifixion, causing the apostles to declare that their Master had come forth from His tomb and making " He is risen " the central message of their gospel.

These theories of how belief in the resurrection arose must be duly weighed. They fall into two groups, one holding that the disciples were still in Jerusalem on Easter, the other that they fled in terror to Galilee immediately after the crucifixion, though some of the women may have remained behind. Much is said about " the Jerusalem traditions " and " the Galilean traditions," *i. e.*, the stories handed down of appearances in Jerusalem and in Galilee: and it is asserted that Matthew and Mark knew only the latter while Luke and John were ignorant of any but the former, the story in John 21 being by a later writer. I have already stated, and need not repeat, the reasons why a flight to Galilee seems improbable. And the argument that an evangelist was ignorant of an appearance because he said nothing about it, rests on "the fatal supposition that he records all he knew." There may have been, and I have tried in some instances to show that there were, good reasons for his silence.

II. The Empty Tomb

All the theories that accept the Jerusalem tradition of appearances on Easter, begin with the empty tomb. They make "He is not here" the preface, as indeed it is, to "He is risen." We might well, then, delay considering them until we have looked at the problem of the tomb.

It has been asserted that there never was a tomb for Jesus, that His body along with those of the two thieves was cast into some pit or left exposed for dogs to devour. This would be credible if He had been put to death in certain countries, but not in Palestine. The Jews were reverent in their treatment of the human body: they believed that a corpse was a source of ceremonial pollution: and they had the express command in their sacred law to bury even the worst of criminals on the day he died (Deut. 21: 23).

It has also been held that the tomb never was emptied, and that the story to the contrary arose through a mistake of the women. In the grey light of Easter morning they approach an empty tomb, supposing it is the one in which Jesus had been laid: and when a young man dressed in white—probably an Essene—who somehow knows in advance what they are seeking, kindly tries to set them right by pointing to the actual tomb and saying, “Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth? He is not here: behold, the place where they laid Him,” instead of thanking him and, perhaps, asking his assistance with the stone, they think he is an angel and flee in fear, without discovering their mistake. In proof of this it is asserted that the evangelists do not agree in their description of the tomb and its internal arrangements; from which it is argued that the women later on could not tell what tomb they had visited. Selwyn dryly remarks, this theory does “violence not only to the evidence but also to common sense.”

If the descriptions of the tomb, fairly treated, do show discrepancies, which is doubtful, we need not be surprised; after the body of Jesus was gone, its transient resting-place was unimportant, and exact details concerning it would not be preserved. But, however much the women from Galilee might blunder, the men who buried Jesus could not fail to know where they laid Him. And if the body of Jesus remained there, it would be a sacred place for them and for all the disciples who lived in Jerusalem; they would visit it often, and bestow upon it the care always given by the Jews to the last resting-place of their loved ones. And in later years, whenever Christians came from any quarter to visit Jerusalem, it would be one of the special places they would ask to see. Moreover, if the tomb had not been found empty on Easter morning, the disciples would have been doubly slow to believe that Jesus had risen: for they thought that a resurrection involved the coming forth of the corpse from the grave where it was buried.

If, then, the tomb was empty on Easter morning, though there had been no resurrection, who did remove the body of Jesus? The first thought of the disciples when they heard the report of the women must have been that a horrible sacrilege had been perpetrated by some enemy. But why should any enemy wish to do this? The fiercest hatred must have been sated by inflicting upon Jesus the most ignominious and painful of deaths; and nothing was to be gained by any further measure. Moreover, anyone handling a dead body would be ceremonially defiled and unable to share in the services of the sacred week. Nor would a grave-robber search for treasure in a new tomb where lay only one whose garments had been divided among the soldiers; and even if he did, he would not carry off the corpse. No, if anyone opened the tomb it must have been a friend. And the only friend who would dare to do it or was in a position to do it, was Joseph of Arimathea himself. Accordingly some hold that because the new tomb was near the place of crucifixion and time was short before the Sabbath would begin, he placed the body there temporarily, and removed it as soon as the Sabbath was over, not wishing it to have a permanent place among the members of his family. But certainly he shows in his earlier acts a high desire to honour the corpse of one whom he had accepted as his Messiah; and what more honourable disposition of the body could there be than to place it where he himself would some day lie? And why did he keep secret the removal, when he had openly asked Pilate for the body? Or if he wished the removal to be unknown, why advertise it by leaving the stone rolled away from the tomb? And why were the grave-clothes left, and in such a remarkable position? We ask these questions, and we find no satisfactory answer. Yet if the resurrection is to be rejected, the empty tomb must first be accounted for.

III. Theories of Deliberate Deception

The easiest but also the least credible of the explanations of belief in the resurrection is that it was the fruit of deliberate deception. One theory would make Jesus Himself the deceiver. He had not expired when they took Him from the cross and placed Him in the tomb: and He revived sufficiently to make His way out,—possibly with the aid of some disciple: then, either at once or somewhat later, He presented Himself to His followers as risen from the dead. Such a theory discredits the vigilance or intelligence of the Roman officers who were stationed to see that Pilate's sentence was carried out, and of the Jews who were eager to accomplish the death of Jesus: both had every opportunity as well as incentive to know whether He actually was dead when His body was handed over to a friend. Also, the difficulties confronting Jesus in this scheme of deception were staggeringly great, and demanded a measure of physical and mental strength incredible in one who had hung for hours on the cross. "It is impossible," says Strauss, "that a being who had stolen half-dead out of the sepulcher, who crept about weak and ill, who required bandaging, strengthening and indulgence, and who nevertheless at last yielded to his sufferings, could have given to his disciples the impression that he was a conqueror over death, the Prince of Life,—an impression which lay at the bottom of their future ministry." But the fatal objection to the theory is the moral character of Jesus. For such a one as He to bolster up the sinking fortunes of His cause by pretending to be a Saviour divinely raised from the dead, involves an ethical lapse impossible to believe. There have been ages when men could accept it; but the world has made progress in critical judgments and moral standards since then.

Another theory holds that the apostles framed the lie. They knew that Jesus was dead; but from loyalty to His memory and desire to spread His teachings, or from reluctance to lose their own position of influence and authority, they asserted He had risen from the grave and appeared to them. It was necessary, of course, to empty the tomb: but this could be done at night with or even without the connivance of Joseph of Arimathea. Also, the real facts must be concealed from all but a very few of the disciples: otherwise, sooner or later some careless tongue would disclose them. And the stories of Jesus' appearances must be carefully framed and rehearsed: for any discrepancy would arouse suspicion that they were false. This theory, also, is so highly improbable that few now propound it. We cannot claim that the apostles were saints, but surely they were fairly honest and sensible men. What had they to gain by such a course of deception? And how could they with power proclaim that no liar has a part in the Kingdom of Heaven while conscious that they themselves were spreading everywhere the greatest of lies? And the lie, even if told with the best of intentions, would doom their labours to failure. Christianity never could have endured if founded on falsehood:—"a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." Klausner, though as a Jew he rejects the resurrection, says emphatically, "Deliberate imposture is not the substance out of which the religion of millions of mankind is created."

IV. THEORIES OF SELF-DECEPTION

IF WE grant that the disciples were honest men, incapable of asserting what they knew was false, still may it not be that they were self-deceived, and the appearances of Jesus were illusions created by their own minds, though they were thoroughly convinced of their external reality? They were liable to such deception. They lacked acquaintance with modern science and methods of physical research, to say nothing of psychology: indeed, their mentality seems sometimes that of a boy of eight. Thus certain writers argue, and form theories accordingly.

One theory as old as Celsus (175 A. D.) and doubtless older, starts with "the Jerusalem tradition," and holds that the appearances of Jesus were hallucinations created at the outset by a conjunction of strong emotion, disordered nerves and the empty tomb. Mary Magdalene is the central figure in it because she was at one time a demoniac and, though supposedly healed by Jesus, remained "a half crazy woman" (Celsus). When the women, especially Mary, came to the tomb Easter morning they were unstrung by the grief and fear of the previous days; and the discovery that the tomb had been opened and the body of their Lord was gone, threw them into great excitement. As they stood there in consternation, some trivial thing,—a rustling of the olive leaves, a sudden sound, the voice of a stranger,—threw them into an hysteria in which all fancied they saw and heard angels, and Mary was confident her Master stood before her in the flesh. They hastened to the Twelve with the wonderful tidings: and their report created similar excitement and hysteria in them. Conviction was at once reached that Jesus had risen and was in their midst, and visions of Him soon were experienced by each and all,—even Thomas, who remained sane longest, being carried away by the general delirium. There could be no question as to the fact of the resurrection: had they not themselves seen and heard the risen Christ?

Such is the theory worked out with different details according as each writer chooses to picture them. It is not as popular to-day as formerly. It contradicts the gospel emphasis of the incredulity with which naturally the women's report was received and, also, all that we know about the character of the apostles. These Galilean fishermen were not emotional or imaginative: a more stolid, prosaic, matter-of-fact group of men could hardly be found. Indeed, one difficulty in teaching them had been that they took Jesus' words so literally as often to miss their spiritual meaning. Again, imagination works along the line of expectation: we are disposed to think we see what we strongly expect to see. But everything indicates that the apostles were sorrowing without hope: their Master had been put to death and it seemed impossible that they could have Him again. "There is not one word in the record to show that any single disciple expected the resurrection or even thought it possible." Mob psychology, too, pronounces against this theory. A wave of hysteria begins slowly, mounts to its height, and dies away by degrees, leaving its victims exhausted and demoralized. There could not have been such a general outbreak of it at once on Easter, nor would it have stopped short a few weeks later, leaving the disciples calm and strong for the tasks they promptly undertook. One more objection to the theory is the empty tomb itself. Before it can be used as the cause of hysteria, an explanation must be had of how it came to be empty; and no satisfactory one is offered.

The other group of the self-deception theories follows " the Galilean tradition." It supposes that as soon as Jesus died, the disciples fled in terror to Galilee, though the women may have lingered in Jerusalem. Resting at their homes in Galilee, and resuming their old occupations, the fugitives speedily regained composure. The fearful scenes through which they had passed faded into a troubled dream; and all their present surroundings brought recollections of the happy days when Jesus walked and talked with them around the shores of the Lake. Love deepened as they dwelt upon those days until it was stronger than death and achieved the resurrection. They came to believe that still He was with them; they could feel His unseen presence; they could almost behold Him: some of them were confident that they did see Him and that He talked with them. Desire created the vision, and in turn the vision strengthened the desire. Presently they had fully persuaded themselves that Jesus had appeared to them in bodily form, and they had even eaten and drunk with Him. As for the tomb in Jerusalem they were confident it was empty: it must be, if He had risen from it and was with them. Possibly the women confirmed this belief by breaking a silence they had maintained concerning their visit to an empty tomb just outside the city. Weeks and months had to go by before the faith of the disciples was fully restored; but there came a day when it was strong enough for them to go back to Jerusalem and undertake to win the world for their Master.

This theory paints a picture of the disciples' days in Galilee as idyllic as Rousseau's picture of a shepherd's life. Let us look at a more probable one, supposing there had been no resurrection. The Eleven and those in their company go back to Galilee disappointed, heavy-hearted, sorely perplexed. The problems I have indicated in a previous chapter fill their thoughts while they keep together on the northward journey; and they talk them over but can find no solution. Arriving in Galilee they scatter to their several homes at Capernaum, Bethsaida, Cana and elsewhere, and take up again the family duties which must have greatly needed their return. They are greeted by their neighbours,—by some with derision and contempt, and by others with a sympathy that shares in their hopelessness. They see each other occasionally,—less often as time goes on, for each has his work for his daily bread. When they do meet they talk about the past: its charm still lingers, but they can find no answer to its problems. When they are apart, they say little about Jesus; belief in Him has disappeared among their acquaintances, and to place their most sacred thoughts before sceptics and scoffers seems sacrilege. In hours of freedom from toil they may seek out spots where they had been with Jesus, and call to mind His wondrous personality and words of grace; but their lives are filled with demands that leave scant space for such meditation. And so, little by little, they settle down into the ordinary life of fishermen and farmers; and the past is ignored, save when it is forced upon them by the children who cry out, "There is a man who went with the crucified Nazarene."

V. THE THEORY OF MISUNDERSTOOD STATEMENTS

THERE IS a theory in which the self-deception is shifted somewhat from the apostles to their hearers. It supposes that back in Galilee the apostles had leisure for meditation upon the character and teachings of Jesus and for study of the Scriptures concerning the Messiah, such as they never had enjoyed in the whirl of the crowded days of their life with Him. As the weeks went by they found new meaning in His words, a clearer insight into His mission; the fulfilment of His promise, "What I do, ye know not now but ye shall know hereafter." And gradually there came the conviction that such a One as He could not die, nor His words become void. No! He still lived with His Father, and His power to guide and protect His followers was greater than before. Faith enabled them to realize His spiritual presence and to receive His messages. So they went back to Jerusalem to proclaim, "Death has not conquered Him: He lives and is with us." But their hearers could not grasp the spiritual meaning of such words, and found in them, or, perhaps, insisted that the apostles should put into them, a declaration that Jesus had come forth in the flesh from the tomb. And legends arose accordingly, and found place in the gospels.

Does all this seem credible? It is true that when a man has been crushed by the death of a comrade with whom he worked and whom he greatly loved, we prescribe time and a change of scene, expecting that later on he will find heart to take up the work again. But would this remedy avail in such a blow as the disciples had met? The anguish and horror might slowly disappear: time might make the past seem like a beautiful dream from which they had been roughly awakened; but there was nothing in all their religious convictions that could remove the divine curse from the cross or kindle hope for its victim in this world or the next.

Even if we suppose that the disciples in Galilee gave themselves to pondering upon Christ's promises of a speedy return, would they find in them anything to create an expectation of an empty tomb and a physical appearance? From the Old Testament they had gained the idea that the Messiah would come in glory to usher in a new age: and the words of Jesus to the high-priest, "Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14: 62; 12: 26), the glory of His transfiguration, and the words of the second Psalm, which He seems to have applied to Himself (Mark 12: 35–37), would confirm this idea. They could not think of even a glorified body: the future life in their thought was either purely spiritual or else a revivification of the dead at the Last Day with resumption of earthly relations. Hence the difficulty of understanding what Christ meant when He spoke of His own resurrection (Mark 9: 10), and the impossibility that they should picture Him as coming to them again in His earthly form. The clearest prediction by Jesus of an immediate resurrection and resumption of earthly relations is, "After I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee" (Mark 14: 28; Matt. 26:32)—referred to by the angels at the tomb. But it made no impression when uttered: Peter's reply shows that his whole thought is on the scattering of the sheep, which Jesus is predicting. "What He had foretold with the utmost emphasis, as an event to be expected in the nearest future, was His return in glory on the clouds of heaven, accompanied by angel-hosts, to inaugurate the Kingdom of God. It was this public and world-transforming event to which His followers looked forward, not to private appearances which He had never foretold, and which consequently they did not expect. Their hopes were fixed on a glorious consummation which should vindicate their faith in Jesus' Messiahship in the sight of friend and foe."

This Galilean theory deals with the accounts of the appearances of Jesus in a very offhand way, dismissing them as mere products of imagination. But they must have been created very early; and could the apostles, if honest, allow them to circulate uncontradicted? And would imagination assign the leading part in the story to Mary Magdalene or any woman instead of to Peter or John? And how about the perplexing details in the appearances, such as the contradictory properties of the body of Jesus and the failure to recognize Him: are these what imagination would naturally picture? Certainly they are not an aid to belief today, nor could they have been in the first century.

All theories requiring a return of the disciples to Galilee before they can believe that Christ has risen, are confronted with the difficulty that from the very first the church held the resurrection to have taken place the third day after the burial. Paul states it as one of the facts he had received and delivered to the Corinthians: and he seems to be repeating what was part of a creed, "So we preach, and so ye believed" (I Cor. 15: 4, 11). The first day of the week was early called "the Lord's day" (Rev. 1: 10), and selected for Christian religious uses (Acts 20: 7; I Cor. 16: 2); and presently it entirely took the place of the Jewish Sabbath as the proper day for rest and worship. "Some unusually strong cause must have operated to produce so startling an innovation": and there is none that can be supposed, if we reject the gospel account of the events that made the first day of the week full of Christian significance. Some critics point to Paul's statement, "He hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15: 4) as proof that the date of the resurrection was determined, not by the event itself, which they deny, but by study of Old Testament predictions. But all the predictions that are suggested, the chief one being Hosea 6: 2, are so obscure that they would not be supposed to refer to the resurrection of Christ on the third day unless the fact that He did rise on that day was already before one who studied them.

VI. The Theory of Real Spiritual Visions

Many to-day who recognize the deity of Our Lord but reject the gospel account of His resurrection, hold the theory that what the gospels represent to have been bodily appearances were, not creations of the imagination but real spiritual visions of Him, granted to the disciples in their hour of need to assure them that He still lived and was able to give the comfort and help He had promised when yet with them in the flesh. They differ in their opinion as to just what did take place; for the term, spiritual vision, is an elastic one. Keim holds that the disciples received what he figuratively calls a telegram (to-day he doubtless would say a radiogram) from heaven, *i. e.*, a message divinely borne in upon their souls. Others would make the experience much like that of Paul at Damascus, a manifestation of Jesus in the spirit. When we ask the details of these visions,—Were they to the same individuals as in the gospel story? Were they similar to what the gospels tell except that there was no fleshly body? Did they include prolonged conversations?—no reply is attempted. The main point insisted upon is that they were not supernatural but belong to the realm of the spirit which psychical research is expected soon to reveal as governed by natural laws. For this reason the theory commends itself to those who share the modern aversion to the miraculous.

The theory has the great recommendation that it clearly recognizes the divine agency of Christ in whatever took place: but it also has the great objection that it requires the rejection of the gospel story. There are other objections, but this alone is fatal to it and the various theories we have already considered. If the gospel story is not true, how could it ever gain credence in the early church? Sceptics usually assume that the first generation of Christians had no definite knowledge of what took place after the crucifixion,—merely a vague idea that Jesus revealed Himself alive three days later, the details of where and how the revelation took place being left for imagination later on. But does this seem possible? The unbelief of Thomas was perfectly natural, and would be shared by all to whom the apostles offered their witness. The very first questions asked would be, How do you know you were not mistaken? Did you actually see Him, touch Him, talk with Him? The resurrection was the main theme of apostolic preaching; and when it was not rejected with scoffing (Acts 17: 32), it would not be accepted unless strong evidence for it was given. What the apostles said would be treasured and carefully transmitted.

It is customary to emphasize—I think somewhat unduly—the tenacity of the Oriental memory: but the facts of the resurrection would impress themselves indelibly upon any memory,—they were so strange and important. To hold that men who were converts of Peter, or members of Paul's churches in Corinth and Ephesus retained no clear remembrance of what was told them about the appearances of the risen Christ, is absurd. And we may be sure that if any gospel did not agree with what the apostles had taught, it would be promptly rejected, as contradicting what these men had learned at first-hand. There were higher critics then as to-day.

Furthermore, would an experience like that of Paul meet the needs of the disciples in the beginning? He already knew what they believed, and was familiar, perhaps, with even the details of the resurrection: but it seemed to him an incredible story. What he needed was to be convinced that it was true. And this conviction was brought overwhelmingly by the vision of the glorified Christ. Doubt became impossible. Jesus was not an imposter: His followers were not spreading monstrous lies: what they had testified became part of his own faith. But, as we have pointed out, the apostles on Easter Day had no expectation of a resurrection, no conception of it. Death had put an impassable barrier between them and their Master. A vision might convince them that He still lived in the realm of the spiritual world, though probably they did not doubt this. It might prove that He had entered into glory among the saints of old. But it would not break down the barrier of death, or prove that He had power to lay down His life and to take it again (John 10: 18). It would not give them the joy and strength of the sense of His abiding presence, or the comfort and instruction of the prolonged interviews with Him. What Christianity would have been if the faith of the disciples had been awakened by spiritual visions, we can hardly conjecture: but certainly it would not have been filled with the power of His resurrection.

These are the main theories of how belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus arose, if there was no such resurrection. They have little in common except the rejection of the gospel narrative. In fact, each usually begins the establishment of its own claims to acceptance by showing that the others should be rejected: so that unitedly they furnish arguments against all. The difficulties, moral as well as historical, in accepting any one of them are greater than in accepting the gospel story, if we are persuaded that Jesus really was divine. Therefore, as I said at the outset, the resurrection cannot be duly treated until an answer is first found to the vital question "What think ye of the Christ? Whose Son is he?" (Matt. 22: 42).

CONCLUSION

CERTAIN excellent persons neither accept nor deny the gospel story of the resurrection, treating it as of minor importance. Why be concerned about the Easter facts, they ask, so long as we have the Easter faith? And we will not make that faith rest upon the credibility of what a handful of men and women experienced nineteen centuries ago. To do so would leave us open to the old rebuke, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" The empty tomb and the manifestations of Jesus in the flesh may have been necessary for the first disciples, but they are not for us: we possess in the long history of the church and in our personal experience far stronger evidence that Christ is risen and abides with His followers.

There is much of truth in what they affirm. When Jesus said "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed," He was not pointing to those who might blindly accept the story of what Thomas had witnessed, but rather to those who should recognize His unseen presence and feel His life permeating their own. To know the power of His resurrection is far more important than to be acquainted with the facts. Yet can we so lightly dismiss the gospel story? Has it nothing more than historical value for us to-day? This is a far-reaching question, whose answer I can only imperfectly indicate. Would that an abler writer might give it the exposition it deserves!

The resurrection of Christ "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light" (II Tim. 1: 10). This is the theme of many an Easter sermon: but if there is uncertainty about the Easter facts, how can it be preached with power? Harnack in a passage often quoted says, "Whatever may have happened at the grave and in the matter of the appearances, one thing is certain: this grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished, that there is a life eternal." But if he is ready to disregard what happened on the first Easter, how can he be so certain that belief was then created, and that it is indestructible? St. Paul says "If we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more" (Rom. 6: 8f.). It is a magnificent declaration: but its whole cogency comes from "knowing": suppose it read "having no interest in knowing"! Belief in immortality may exist, though the resurrection of Christ is denied; but in that case His grave is not its birthplace. It may be called indestructible because it persists despite all arguments against it: but it is based on human longings or on philosophy and not on fact. Even the proof, given by Jesus to the Sadducees, that our relationship to God must be eternal because God is eternal, and His declaration to Martha "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live," require for our faltering faith the seal of truth set upon them by His own victory over death revealed by His resurrection. "I was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore" makes immortality not only a living hope but an abiding certainty.

The resurrection of Christ was also the birthday of the church. It is agreed that without belief in a Lord who had risen and appeared to them, the apostles never would have roused to undertake the dismaying task of winning men to accept Him as their Saviour. And if they had not made His resurrection the central theme of their preaching, they would have gained few hearers. Men would not care to hear about Him, if He were presented as the Great Teacher. The Jews had Moses and the prophets; the Greeks had Socrates and Plato and others: why exchange them for an obscure Galilean? Nor would the presentation of Him as the Great Miracle-Worker attract attention. The world had more than an abundance of professed miracle-workers: and, besides, Jesus was dead, and who cares for a dead magician? The apostles gained a hearing because they preached Christ risen from the dead. "With great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 4: 33). "The power the disciples received as witnesses was that of absolute certainty in their convictions regarding the Risen Lord" (Garvie). It was the message of the resurrection that held the hearers at Pentecost, and that made the Thessalonians "turn from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven whom he raised from the dead" (I Thess.

1: 9f.). It caused some even in sceptical Athens to say "We will hear thee concerning this yet again" (Acts 17: 32). And the frivolous Agrippa was interested enough to devote an afternoon to hearing about "one Jesus who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive" (Acts 25: 19).

The complaint to-day is general that preachers have small audiences and their sermons lack power. May not one explanation be that the risen Christ is seldom their theme? Not only is there an inclination to enter into unsuccessful rivalry with newspaper editorials or current topics: but when Jesus is presented, His earthly words or deeds are usually the topic. In the last half century we have centered thought and study as never before upon the life of Jesus during His public ministry; and this has caused the glory and power of the risen Christ to fade from our view. If we long and pray to-day for a second Pentecost, can we better prepare for its coming than by turning again to the risen Christ, and proclaiming Him to the world as eagerly and confidently as the apostles did on the first Pentecostal day?

Again, the resurrection and appearances of Jesus created the conviction that He is ever with His followers. We have already dwelt on this. A study of the life of the apostles shows how the promise "Lo, I am with you always" was verified. They went forth, not as representatives of an absent Lord, but as fellow workers with a present One. The courage and rejoicing with which they met all trials and obstacles came from a sense of His nearness and sympathy. The gifts and guidance of the Holy Spirit were through Him. And to Him they ascribed all that was accomplished. "This Jesus did God raise up" and "having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath poured forth this which ye see and hear," they declared at Pentecost (Acts 2:33). "Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee," said Peter (9:34). "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus who appeared unto thee, hath sent me," said Ananias (9:17). "In Christ" and "Christ in me" are the keywords of Paul's statements about all his labours. This presence and help of Christ was part of the good tidings they offered to their hearers; and those who accepted it found it verified in their own experience, even as have all His followers to the present day. Other religions cherish a memory: Christianity alone rejoices in a life.

It has been finely said that on the cross Our Lord gave Himself for us: through the resurrection He gave Himself to us. There is ever danger that we may dwell upon the first gift and fail to accept the second, or, as Garvie puts it, substitute a plan of salvation for union with the living Christ as a Saviour. The unseen presence of Christ and the mystical union of the believer with His Lord are matters often treated distrustfully even by Christians in an age that prides itself upon being practical. They are not rejected, but they are not actually realized, and made the source of strengh and joy in Christian service. And so the church grows feeble and its work slows down because it fails to know and appropriate the power of His resurrection.

There are further messages of Easter morning as vital to us as to the first disciples. I shall indicate only one more. The central fact of the Christian religion is the deity of Christ. Apart from that Christianity is little more than the grown-up child of Judaism; and its Founder is one whom we may admire and imitate but cannot accept as "the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5: 9). There are many proofs of His deity, but the crowning one is His resurrection. He "was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1: 4). We have noted how this was impressed upon Thomas and the Twelve and changed their whole attitude toward Him. They had called Him Lord and Master, they had recognized Him to be the Messiah, they had followed Him with increasing awe as well as love; but not until He stood before them alive from the dead, and proclaimed that all authority had been given Him in heaven and on earth, were they convinced that He was the Only Begotten Son of God, One with the Father. "And here for us, too," says Dr. Speer, voicing the Christian world, "is the impregnable rock upon which Christian conviction rests,—Jesus Christ rose again from the dead."

Printed in the United States of America

BS2427 .H64
The resurrection of Jesus Christ a new
Princeton Theological Seminary–Speer Library
1 1012 00029 6543

DATE DUE

[redacted]			

Demco, Inc. 38-293